United Nations CRPD/C/SGP/1

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Distr.. General
16 November 2018

Original: English
English, Russian and Spanish only

Initial report submitted by Singapore under article 35 of the Convention, due in 2015*,**

[Date received: 30 June 2016]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

** The annexes are on file with the Secretariat and are available for consultation. They may also be accessed from the web page of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

GE.18-19571(E)

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Foreword

Singapore celebrated her 50th year of independence in 2015. As we enter into the next lap, it is pertinent for us to decide on the kind of society we want to become. I believe that this is reflected in the way our country treats those who are vulnerable.

This UNCRPD report is a significant milestone which exemplifies the collaborative efforts among the various stakeholders in making Singapore a more inclusive society. Singapore first signed the Convention in November 2012 and ratified it in July 2013. We recognised the need for greater inclusivity in the society and started the first Enabling Masterplan in 2007. The Masterplan charts the roadmap for Singapore as we work towards becoming an inclusive society where persons with disabilities become integral and contributing members of society.

We have made good strides in the area of early intervention, education, employment, mobility and accessibility as well as supporting the use of assistive technology for work, play and improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities. Today, there are more support services and assistance available for persons with disabilities to live their aspirations and realise their potential.

As we embark on the third 5-year Enabling Masterplan (2017 to 2021), we are cognizant of the need to enable greater awareness of persons with disabilities among us and to create opportunities for interaction at school, work and within the community. The good work of those who have helped bring the country this far will continue.

Building an inclusive society involves one and all. A concerted effort from all stakeholders would be needed to effect a positive social change, so that Singapore can become the truly inclusive society and caring nation that we envision it to be.

Tan Chuan-Jin
Minister
Ministry of Social and Family Development

Glossary of terms

ADLs	Activities of Daily Living
APS	Audible Pedestrian Signal
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
AWWA	Formerly known as Asian Women's Welfare Association
BCA	Building and Construction Authority
CART	Communication Access Real-Time Translation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEL	Centre for Enabled Living
CPF	Central Provident Fund
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DAPE	Disability Awareness Public Education Campaign
DISE	Diploma in Special Education
DSP	Development Support Programme
EIPIC	Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children
EM	Enabling Masterplan
EMIC	Enabling Masterplan Implementation Committee
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GM+	Green Man +
GRCs	Group Representation Constituencies
HDB	Housing and Development Board
HPB	Health Promotion Board
HSA	Health Sciences Authority
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IHLs	Institutes of Higher Learning
ITE	Institute of Technical Education
KKH	KK Women's and Children's Hospital
LSEds	Learning Support Educators
LTA	Land Transport Authority
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
MRT	Mass Rapid Transit
MSF	Ministry of Social and Family Development
NCSS	National Council of Social Service
NIE	National Institute of Education

NMPs	Nominated Members of Parliament
NParks	National Parks Board
NUH	National University Hospital
ODP	Open Door Programme
PDPA	Personal Data Protection Act
REACH	Reaching Everyone for Active Citizenry@Home
SADeaf	Singapore Association for the Deaf
SCD	Standing Committee of Disability
SDSC	Singapore Disability Sports Council
SGE	SG Enable
SNTC	Special Needs Trust Company
SPD	Formerly known as Society for the Physically Disabled
SPED	Special Education
TAFEP	Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
UD	Universal Design
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Concern for the Disabled
VWOs	Voluntary Welfare Organisations
WDA	Singapore Workforce Development Agency

Part I.

Executive Summary

1. The Republic of Singapore ("Singapore") signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the "Convention") on 30 November 2012 and subsequently ratified it on 18 July 2013. The Convention came into force for Singapore on 18 August 2013. In addition to the Convention, Singapore also acceded to the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled on 30 March 2015, which has yet to enter into force.

2. This report constitutes the initial report of Singapore in accordance with Article 35 of the Convention. It covers the period from 2004 to 2014 and up to 2015 in some instances.

3. In 2006, the Government identified the need for greater inclusivity in the society, and set up a Steering Committee consisting of representatives from civil society and government agencies, to draft and adopt the first Enabling Masterplan in 2007. This was a five year national roadmap which outlined our vision for a society where persons with disabilities are fully integrated, empowered to reach their potential and are contributing members of society. The roadmap adopted a life course approach and charted the development of programmes and services for the disability sector. Since then, there has been much progress made to enhance the various facets of the lives of persons with disabilities. The second five-year Enabling Masterplan was adopted in 2012 and is currently being implemented.

4. Both Masterplans have guided Singapore's efforts to enable persons with disabilities to be integral and contributing members of our society. The Masterplans also build on the foundation that exists for the progressive realisation of the Convention in Singapore. To ensure the effective implementation of the Masterplans and to facilitate coordination between multiple agencies, an inter-ministerial Standing Committee on Disabilities was set up in 2007. Civil society organisations are also engaged in monitoring the implementation of the Masterplans through the Enabling Masterplan Implementation Committee set up in 2012, which consists of civil society members and government agencies.

5. Some of the key initiatives are summarised below.

Early Intervention and Education

6. Children with developmental delays are supported through the Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children (EIPIC). EIPIC provides therapy and education support services to children with disabilities. Since its commencement in 2003, the Government has expanded coverage and raised subsidies for children receiving such services. Universal subsidies have been increased and now support families up to the 80th percentile of households where it previously supported up to the 50th percentile of households. In 2012, the Government introduced the Development Support Programme (DSP) to provide early intervention services for children with mild developmental delays in their natural setting within mainstream childcare centres and kindergartens.

7. Children with more severe disabilities attend Special Education Schools ("SPED schools") where they are taught by specially trained teachers and can learn at their own pace. Children with mild to moderate special needs are integrated in mainstream schools, with additional resources and facilities to support their learning. To promote integration and inclusiveness of students with disabilities, SPED schools are located within the proximity of mainstream schools to enable greater interaction and collaboration.

Employment

8. SG Enable (SGE), an agency dedicated to enabling persons with disabilities, was set up in July 2013. It provides information and referral services, offers training and job

options, and administers grants and other forms of support to persons with disabilities and their caregivers. One of SGE's key functions is to help enhance the employability and employment options for persons with disabilities.

9. Several schemes are in place to encourage better employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. The Open Door Programme (ODP) was enhanced in 2013 to offer a wider variety of services to individuals with disabilities and their employers, including job re-design, workplace modifications, training, job placement and support services. The Open Door Job Portal, launched in 2014, also made job searches more accessible to persons with disabilities. Special Employment Credits (a form of wage offset) are provided by the Government, to employers as an incentive to hire persons with disabilities. The Workfare Income Supplement scheme also supplements the wages of low-income persons with disabilities to enable them to achieve financial independence.

Healthcare

10. As of 1 November 2015, all Singaporeans will receive basic health insurance coverage for life under the MediShield Life scheme, regardless of pre-existing conditions or disabilities. Approximately 340,000 Singaporeans who were previously uninsured are now insured under MediShield Life.

Living Independently in the Community

11. A range of services are provided for adults with disabilities. The services facilitate community integration and enable persons with disabilities to lead meaningful and independent lives. Tax reliefs were enhanced to give greater encouragement and recognition to individuals supporting their loved ones with disabilities.

12. Enhancements were also made to the public transport system and built environment. An Accessibility Fund provided by the Government helps defray the cost of upgrading existing private buildings. Additionally, there are various transport subsidies and options to facilitate travel of persons with disabilities.

13. In August 2015, the Government expanded coverage and raised subsidies for those who require assistive technology. Furthermore, with the set-up of a new technology facility at the Enabling Village, assistive technology is now more accessible for education, employment and independent living. It also spurs new ideas and solutions to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

14. This report is prepared by the Disability Division of the Ministry of Social and Family Development, with inputs from the Standing Committee on Disability and other agencies.

General Information on Singapore

Demographic, Economic, Social and Cultural Characteristics of Singapore

Physical Environment

15. Singapore is an island state located between Peninsular Malaysia and Indonesia. Owing to its small land area of approximately 718.9 square kilometres, optimisation of land use and its integration with the infrastructure and transportation planning is of paramount importance in order to meet the needs of the different sectors of its community. Singapore enjoys a tropical climate of abundant rainfall and high humidity throughout the year.

Demographic Characteristics

Population Trends

16. As a small city-state with no natural resources, the Government invests heavily in the development of its citizenry and encourages its people to work hard and be adaptable to changes in the global environment. This philosophy underlies Singapore's approach to national development.

17. As at end June 2015, the resident population, comprising Singapore citizens and permanent residents, was 3.90 million, with an annualised growth rate of 0.8% from 2009. 15.4% were aged below 15 years, 72.7% were aged 15-64 years and 11.8% were 65 years and above. The median age of the resident population was 39.6 years in 2015, compared to 36.9 years in 2009. Males made up 49.1% and females made up 50.9% of the resident population.

18. The resident ethnic composition remains largely the same as the last census in 2010, with 74.3% Chinese, 13.3% Malay, 9.1% Indian, and 3.3% comprising other ethnic groups in 2014.

19. The population density increased from 7,025 persons per square kilometre in 2009 to 7,697 persons per square kilometre in 2015.

20. An estimated 3%[1] of the resident population has some form of disability. This translates to about 116,000 individuals. The incidence rate of disability is as below.

	Incidence Rate
Pre School (0 to 6 years)	3.2%
School (7 to 18 years)	2.5%
Adulthood and Aged	2.5%

Urban Population and Environmental Aspects

21. Singapore provides affordable housing through public housing subsidy schemes, and heavily subsidised rental housing for those who cannot afford to own their flats. About 80%[2] of Singapore's residents live in high-rise public housing built by the Government. The rest of the population lives mainly in private housing estates.

22. Singapore is also known as a garden city with an environment that is clean and green, and where residents enjoy a high standard of public health. The air quality in terms of the Pollutant Standards Index was in the "Good" to "Moderate" range for 97% and the 'Unhealthy' range for 3% of the days in year 2014. The "Unhealthy" days were all attributed to trans-boundary haze pollution. The air pollution levels in 2014 were within the World Health's Organisation's Air Quality Guidelines or Interim Targets.

23. The incidence of food-water- and vector- borne diseases is low, and practically all Singapore residents enjoy modern sanitation.

Fertility and Infant Mortality Rates and Life Expectancy

24. Singapore's resident fertility rate was 1.25 births per female in 2014, compared to 1.22 in 2009. There were 37,967 resident live births, of which 51% were males, and 49% were females.

25. Infant mortality rate dropped from 2.2 per thousand resident live-births in 2009 to 1.8 in 2014. Maternal mortality rate has remained low. There was no maternal mortality in

[1] Enabling Masterplan 2012–2016

[2] Key Demographic Indicators, Population Trends 2015

2009, and 2.4 maternal deaths per hundred thousand live and still-births in 2014 (among the lowest in the world).

26. Life expectancy at birth for the resident population continued to increase from 81.4 years in 2009 to 82.8 years in 2014.

27. The proportion of Singapore's aged population (65 years and above) increased from 8.8% in 2009 to 11.8% in 2015.

Socio-Economic and Cultural Indicators

Standard of Living

28. The United Nations' Human Development Report 2014 ranked Singapore 9th out of 187 countries on the Human Development Index, up from 27th out of 169 countries in the 2010 Report. This reflects an overall improvement in the standard of living in the areas of life expectancy, educational attainment and real income.

29. Singapore's socio-economic performance can be attributed to its continued political stability, quality judicial performance and the high integrity of its government. In 2007, the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy ranked Singapore as the most politically stable country in Asia, and second out of 14 jurisdictions in Asia for quality of the judicial system. Singapore scored highest in terms of integrity of government, with a corruption level of 1.3, the lowest in the region.

30. In 2014, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was S$390 billion (USD$279 billion) while GDP per capita was S$71,318 (USD$50,941).[3] Singapore's economy continues to do well, with a real growth of 2.9% in 2014.

31. The median gross monthly income of full-time employed residents[4] in Singapore was S$3,770 (USD$2,693) in 2014, compared to S$2,326 (USD$1,661) in 2004. This represents an increase of 4.5% per annum.

Rate of Inflation

32. The annual inflation rate for 2014 was 1.0%.

External Debt

33. In the initial years following independence, Singapore had a significant amount of public external debt, which was mainly used towards financing infrastructure development. In 1970, Singapore's external debt was S$173.8 million (USD$124 million), decreasing to S$4.7 million (USD$3 million) in 1994. Since 1996, Singapore has had no public sector external debt. In 2014, the gross national savings was S$182 billion (USD$130 billion).

Labour Force Participation

34. Singapore's resident labour force comprised 2.2 million people in 2014. The resident labour force participation rate was 67.0%, up from 63.3% in 2004. The annual seasonally adjusted resident unemployment rate for 2014 was 2.8% and is on a general declining trend from 4.7% in 2004.[5]

Literacy Rate

35. The literacy rate (number of literate persons for every 100 residents) for the resident population aged 15 years and older was 96.7% in 2014, up from 96.5% in 2013 and 93.8 % in 2004. The mean years of schooling for residents aged 25 years and older is 10.6 years in

[3] Source: http://www.singstat.gov.sg/statistics/latest-data#18

[4] Source: Table 2- Key Characteristics of Resident Labour Force, 2004-2014 (June) in http://stats.mom.gov.sg/Pages/Labour-Force-in-Singapore-2014-Labour-Force.aspx

[5] The annual average unemployment figures are the simple averages of the non-seasonally adjusted unemployment figures obtained at quarterly intervals.

2014, up from 8.9 years in 2004. Among residents aged 25 years and above, 51.1% have Post-Secondary, Polytechnic or University qualifications, up from 33.9% in 2004.

36. Singapore has four official languages: Malay, Mandarin, Tamil and English. Malay is the national language while English is the language of administration. English is the common language learnt by all students in Singapore.

Religion

37. Singapore's Constitution guarantees every person's right to profess, practise and propagate his religion. The 2010 Census[6] showed that 33% of the resident population aged 15 years and over were Buddhists, 18% were Christians, 15% were Muslims, 11% Taoist fundamentalists and 5% were Hindus.

Singapore's Constitutional, Political and Legal Structure

History of Singapore's Independence

38. After nearly 140 years of colonial rule (from 1819 to 1959), with the exception of the Japanese Occupation from 1942 to 1945, Singapore was granted self-government in 1959. Following a short-lived merger with the Federation of Malaysia, Singapore became a fully independent and sovereign nation on 9 August 1965. On 21 September 1965, independent Singapore was admitted to the United Nations. On 22 December 1965, Singapore became a republic, with Mr Yusof bin Ishak as the first President of the Republic of Singapore elected by Parliament.

Framework of the Singapore Government

39. Singapore is a republic with a parliamentary system of government, headed by its elected President. The Constitution provides for the three main branches of state: the executive, the legislature and the judiciary.

The Head of State

40. The President is the Head of State. He is elected by the citizens of Singapore and holds office for a fixed term of six years. He has the power to veto the Government's proposals related to use of the nation's past reserves, appointment and removal of key office holders, orders under the maintenance of religious harmony, detention under internal security and investigations pertaining to corruption. These Presidential powers provide important checks and balances to the Government with regard to preventing the misuse of the nation's reserves and ensuring that the public service is impartial.

41. A Council of Presidential Advisors is appointed to advise and make recommendations to the President. The President must consult the Council in some of his functions, for instance, the appointment of key civil servants.

Presidential Council for Minority Rights

42. The Constitution also provides for a Presidential Council for Minority Rights whose particular function is to draw attention to any bill or to any subsidiary legislation which, in its opinion, discriminates against any racial or religious community.

43. The Council also has the general function to consider and report on such matters affecting persons of any racial or religious community in Singapore as may be referred to it by Parliament or the Government.

[6] Source: Section 3 on Religion in Census (pg 29)
http://www.singstat.gov.sg/docs/default-source/default-document-library/publications/publications_and_papers/cop2010/census_2010_release1/cop2010sr1.pdf

The Executive

44. Executive authority is vested in the President and is exercisable by him or the Cabinet.

45. The administration of the Government is vested in the Cabinet,[7] headed by the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is appointed by the President as the Member of Parliament who commands the confidence of the majority of the members of Parliament. Ministers are appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister and are selected from among the Members of Parliament. The Cabinet is responsible for all government policies and the day-to-day administration of the affairs of the state and is collectively responsible to Parliament.

The Legislature

46. The Singapore Legislature is made up of the President and Parliament.[8]

47. The Singapore Parliament is unicameral. It consists of elected Members from single-member constituencies and Group Representation Constituencies (GRCs), as well as Nominated Members of Parliament (NMPs).

48. GRCs were created to ensure the representation of minority races in Parliament. Candidates for election in a GRC contest in groups of four to six persons, which must include at least one candidate belonging to a minority racial community.

49. The President may appoint up to nine NMPs for a term of up to two and a half years on the recommendation of a Special Select Committee of Parliament. NMPs are persons who have rendered distinguished public service, or who have brought honour to the Republic, or who have distinguished themselves in the field of the arts, culture, the sciences, business, industry, the professions, social or community service or the labour movement. NMPs are intended to reflect independent and non-partisan views. Notably, one of the nine NMPs appointed to Parliament for the period of 26 August 2014 to 24 August 2015 and from 12 March 2016 is Ms Chia Yong, a person with disability.

50. The Constitution also provides for the appointment of up to nine Non-Constituency Members of Parliament.[9] They are additional Members from opposition parties who were not voted in at the General Elections. They are appointed to ensure the representation from a political party or parties not forming the Government in Parliament.

The Judiciary

51. The Supreme Court, the State Courts, and the Family Justice Courts are the national judicial bodies. The Supreme Court consists of the Chief Justice, the Judges of Appeal and judges who are appointed from time to time. The Constitution protects the integrity and independence of judges at the Supreme Court.

52. Judicial power is vested in the Supreme Court and in such subordinate courts as may be provided for by any written law for the time being in force. The Supreme Court Bench consists of the Chief Justice, Judges of Appeal, Judges of the High Court, Senior Judges, International Judges and Judicial Commissioners.

53. Singapore is widely reputed for having a corruption-free and efficient judicial system. (see **Annex A**) The direct and indirect benefits of having a sound, corruption-free and efficient system are available to all Singaporeans, regardless of disability, gender, age or ethnicity.

[7] Source: http://www.cabinet.gov.sg

[8] Source: http://www.parliament.gov.sg

[9] A Non-Constituency Member of Parliament (NCMP) is an opposition candidate polling the highest percentage of votes among losers at the general election and who is declared elected as an NCMP.

Key Bodies Overseeing Law-related Matters

54. In Singapore, there are four key bodies that deal with matters of the law. The Ministry of Law advances access to justice and the rule of law by ensuring a sound and progressive legal framework that is relevant and modern, and enhances economic and social development through the implementation of sound and transparent legal policies. The Attorney-General's Chambers serves Singapore's interests and upholds the rule of law through sound advice, effective representation, fair and independent prosecution and accessible legislation. The Singapore Academy of Law, supports the growth and development of the legal industry, builds up the intellectual capital of the legal profession by enhancing legal knowledge and improves the efficiency of legal practice through legal technology. The Law Society of Singapore serves its members and the community by sustaining a competent and independent Bar to uphold the rule of law and ensure access to justice by the public. The Society's website has a directory of lawyers and law practices in Singapore, thereby making it very convenient for citizens to search for lawyers.

Singapore's Approach to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

55. Singapore fully subscribes to the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We respect the principle of the universality of human rights and consider human rights to be indivisible, with economic, social and cultural rights as important as civil and political rights. The manner in which all rights are attained and implemented must nevertheless take cognisance of specific national circumstances and aspirations.

56. The Government believes that the maturity of a society is reflected in the way it treats and supports those who are disadvantaged. Accordingly, it is Singapore's vision to become an inclusive society where women and men, including persons with disabilities, are given the opportunity to be equal, integral and contributing members of society.

Introduction to the Enabling Masterplan

57. With a view to achieving its vision of becoming an inclusive society, Singapore developed the inaugural Enabling Masterplan (EM), a five-year roadmap to chart the development and implementation of programmes and services for the benefit of persons with disabilities, their caregivers and their families across Government ministries and other stakeholders, such as Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs). In September 2006, the EM Steering Committee was formed and comprised of members from VWOs, and the public and private sectors.

58. The first EM was for the period 2007 to 2011[10] and adopted a holistic life-course approach in the review of services and programmes in the disability sector. The vision was for children with disabilities to receive effective early intervention, education to maximise their potential, and for adults with disabilities to enjoy equal employment opportunities so they can be self-reliant through work and enabled to lead independent lives as contributing members of society. The plan also saw to the empowerment of families to care for their members with disabilities in their homes as required. The recommendations were formulated based on consultations from all stakeholders, including persons with disabilities, their families, VWOs, employers, professionals and practitioners in the field providing services and support to persons with disabilities.

59. The second EM, which is for the period from 2012 to 2016,[11] continues to build on the foundation of the inaugural EM, which sought to support the empowerment and

[10] The EM report for 2007-2011 can be found here: http://app.msf.gov.sg/Research-Room/Research-Statistics/Enabling-Masterplan

[11] The EM report for 2012-2016 can be found here: http://app.msf.gov.sg/Portals/0/Topic/Issues/EDGD/Enabling%20Masterplan%202012-2016%20Report%2008%20Mar1.pdf

recognition of persons with disabilities and give them a full opportunity to become integral and contributing members of society. The second EM is a roadmap for Singapore to become an inclusive society and to progressively realise the obligations under the Convention.

60. In formulating the recommendations for the second EM, a ground-up approach was taken, and a series of consultations and focus group discussions were organised to garner feedback from persons with disabilities and their family members and relevant stakeholders. About 200 participants attended the focus group discussions.

61. The Government also expects to spend about S$1billion (USD$714 million) over 2012–2016 on programmes and services for persons with disabilities. This is an increase of about 20% compared to the first EM. The key focus areas for 2012–2016 in the second EM are in **Annex B**.

Multi-stakeholder approach

62. The EM was inspired by a vision of an inclusive society where persons with disabilities are empowered and recognised, and given full opportunity to be equal, integral and contributing members of society. While policies and services can facilitate access to opportunities, ultimately, integration can only be brought about through a mind-set that embraces diversity. It takes the collective effort of the public, people and private sectors to build such a society.

63. Singapore acknowledges the key roles played by Non-Governmental Organisations or VWOs in the implementation of the EM. The Government sought the views of VWOs and persons with disabilities in the drafting of the report. About 60 individuals, including persons with disabilities, from 40 VWOs attended a consultation held on the Convention.

Part II.
General Provisions of the Convention

Article 1 to 4 Purpose, Definitions, General Principles and General Obligations

64. In line with its vision for an inclusive society, the Government is committed to the principles of the Convention and the vision to become an inclusive society, where persons with disabilities are empowered and recognized, and given full opportunity to be integral and contributing members of society.[12] While the Convention is not automatically part of domestic law, it is given effect through a comprehensive range of existing and developing legislation, policies and other measures for the implementation of rights, consistent with the purpose of Singapore's EMs.

Understanding of the concepts provided in articles 1 and 2 of the Convention

Definition of "Disability" in Singapore

65. There is no uniform definition of "disability" in Singapore. There are also several pieces of domestic legislation which define "disability" in various contexts, in order to protect persons with different disabilities. For the purposes of the EM, persons with disabilities include all persons "whose prospects of securing, retaining places and advancing in education and training institutions, employment and recreation as equal

[12] Source: EM 2012-2016, Executive Summary, paragraph 2.

members of the community are substantially reduced as a result of physical, sensory, intellectual and developmental impairments".[13]

66. When implementing disability schemes and services, the Government takes into account disability conditions such as physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, hearing impairment and visual impairment. Qualification for Government schemes and services are often based on the permanence of their condition, which is based on diagnosis by medical professionals.

67. For example, the Ministry of Health's ElderShield scheme is intended to provide protection against severe physical disability. ElderShield is an affordable severe disability insurance scheme providing basic financial protection to those who need long-term care, especially during old age. The extent of physical disability is measured by the number of Activities of Daily Living (ADLs), a standard widely used by private insurers who offer similar disability insurance schemes. Under ElderShield, members who are not able to perform at least 3 out of the 6 ADLs, will be eligible for insurance pay-outs. The six ADLs are washing, dressing, feeding, toileting, mobility and transferring.

68. There are also different pieces of domestic legislation which define and offer protection to persons with disabilities. For example, the Penal Code, which provides for the prosecution of individuals who procure sexual activity with a person with mental disability, defines mental disability as "an impairment of or a disturbance in the functioning of the mind or brain resulting from any disability or disorder of the mind or brain which impairs the ability to make a proper judgement in the giving of consent to sexual touching".[14]

69. The Special Needs Scheme[15] is a special scheme under the Central Provident Fund Act which help parents make provisions for children with disabilities, persons with disabilities including all persons who are attending or have attended a SPED school, or who require assistance in at least one ADL.[16]

70. Under the Building and Construction Authority (BCA)'s Building Control Regulations, building developers are required to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to easily gain access to and exit from the whole or part of a building, and able to carry out their activities within the building with reasonable ease. The Building Control Act also imposes a duty on the building owners not to remove, obstruct or alter any physical accessible features of the building provided under the Building Control Act. Under this Act, a person with disability is defined as an individual who has an impairment of hearing or sight, or an impairment which limits his ability to walk, or which restricts him to using a wheelchair.

Reasonable Accommodation and Universal Design

71. Singapore also believes in providing for "reasonable accommodation" for persons with disabilities without imposing a "disproportionate or undue burden" on the building owners. Hence, the Code on Accessibility in the Built Environment was published to set a minimum standard for compliance with the Building Control Regulations. For existing buildings which were built before the mandatory requirement to provide accessibility, the government provides capital incentives to encourage the private sectors to upgrade buildings with at least basic accessibility features.

72. The concept of "Universal Design" (UD) is being progressively implemented in Singapore. UD, in the broadest term, is "design for all people". It seeks to create an

[13] Source: EM 2007-2011 Chapter 1, paragraph 3.

[14] Section 376F (5) of the Penal Code (Cap. 224, 2008 Rev. Ed. Sg.).

[15] The Special Needs Savings Scheme is a special scheme which allows parents to nominate their children to receive monies upon their demise.

[16] Paragraph 9 under Special Needs Savings Scheme, of the Central Provide Fund (Amendment) Bill 2011 Second Reading Speech (accessible at http://www.mom.gov.sg/newsroom/speeches/2011/the-central-provident-fund-amendment-bill-2011-second-reading-speech-by-mr-tan-chuanjin-minister-of-state-for-national-development-and-manpower-21-november-2011-330pm-parliament). See Article 12 for more information.

environment which addresses the needs of all age groups and people of different abilities including temporary disability. To raise awareness and capabilities among the building professionals and owners, BCA introduced two UD Guides in 2006 and 2007 for adoption in all building designs, including commercial buildings, residential buildings as well as public and community facilities.

73. The Government promotes the implementation of UD through an annual UD Award, initiated in early 2007. This award recognises good practices and special efforts taken by building owners and consultants in implementing UD features, over and beyond the mandatory requirements as specified in the Code on Accessibility in the Built Environment.[17]

Legal framework for protecting and safeguarding the rights of persons with disabilities

74. Singapore law provides protection and redress to persons with disabilities under its laws governing the relevant spheres. The principle of equality, which applies to all persons regardless of whether they have a disability, is entrenched in Article 12 of the Constitution in Singapore, which states that "all persons are equal before the law and entitled to the equal protection of the law." The Constitution of Singapore is the supreme law in Singapore and any law enacted by the Legislature which is inconsistent with the Constitution is void. Where any legislation or policy contravenes the provisions of the Constitution, all persons, including persons with disabilities, may apply to the High Court to seek a judicial review of that particular legislation on the grounds that it is inconsistent with the Constitution.

75. Singapore respects the inherent dignity, individual autonomy and independence of persons with disabilities. Under Singapore law, all persons are assumed to have legal capacity to make decisions unless it is established that a person lacks capacity. In determining the lack of capacity, the principles under the Act apply (see **Annex C**).

76. Under the Mental Capacity Act, a person lacks capacity in relation to a matter if at the material time he is unable to make a decision for himself in relation to the particular matter because of an impairment of, or a disturbance in the functioning of, the mind or brain. The Act explicitly states that "a lack of capacity cannot be established merely by reference to a person's age or appearance; or a condition of his, or an aspect of his behaviour, which might lead others to make unjustified assumptions about his capacity".[18] This ensures a balance between the protection of persons with disabilities and respect for their inherent dignity, individual autonomy and independence.

77. Singapore also has laws to protect its citizens, deter crime and protect employees' rights, which also cover persons with disabilities. We also review our policies and laws regularly from time to time to ensure that they remain relevant and adequate in meeting changing needs. For example, the Children and Young Persons Act was amended in 2011 to provide for licensing of children homes to accord better protection to children in residential care. The regulation extends to homes for children with disabilities.

78. Singapore also introduced specific laws to provide further support to persons with disabilities. For example, the Mental Capacity Act was enacted to safeguard the interests of those who lose their mental capacity, including persons with intellectual disability. The Central Provident Fund Act was amended in 2011 to implement the Special Needs Savings Scheme, which seeks to ensure that the financial needs of children with disabilities are taken care of through their deceased parents' Central Provident Fund (CPF) monies. The Building Construction Authority's Code on Accessibility 2013 requires building owners to cater to people with different impairments.

79. Beyond enacting laws, encouraging change in wider public attitudes and mind-sets towards persons with disabilities is equally important. In March 2013, the National Council

[17] The implementation of UD is described in further detail in our discussions on the specific rights under the Convention (e.g. Article 9).

[18] Section 4(3) of the Mental Capacity Act (Cap. 177A, 2010 Rev. Ed. Sg.).

of Social Service (NCSS) launched a "We are Able!" campaign to raise awareness of the Convention, and encourage Singaporeans to pledge achievable actions towards building a more inclusive society.

Singapore's approach to ensure effective realization of the principles and obligations under the Convention

Enabling Masterplans (EMs) for Persons with Disabilities

80. As set out in **Annex B** of this report, the EMs lay the foundation for the progressive realisation of the Convention in Singapore.

81. The guiding principles of the EM2012-2016 are:

- To take an inclusive approach towards persons with disabilities;
- To recognise the autonomy and independence of persons with disabilities;
- To take an integrated approach with the support of people, public and private sectors; and,
- To involve the community as a source of support and to empower families to care.

82. The Government also facilitated the formation of the EM Implementation Committee (EMIC), tasked to closely monitor the implementation of the EM recommendations and provide feedback from the disability sector to the government on such implementation. The EMIC also strengthens the dialogue between the people, public and private sectors in building an inclusive society for persons with disabilities. It comprises representatives from various disability groups. The key members of the EM2012-2016 Steering Committee, namely the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and respective Sub-Committee chairs, are also members of the EMIC to ensure continuity.

Standing Committee on Disability

83. The Standing Committee on Disability (SCD) was set up to co-ordinate disability-related policy issues at the government-level. The SCD is chaired by the Permanent Secretary[19] of the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and comprises members from relevant government ministries and agencies, including the ministries for education, health, manpower, transport, national development and agencies such as the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA), NCSS and SGE.

84. The SCD steers policy directions and develops strategies to address disability issues, coordinates inter-government and inter-agency efforts to address disability issues holistically, looks into resource planning for the disability sector; and tracks the implementation of the EM recommendations accepted by the Government. As required by the Convention, the SCD serves as the national mechanism for coordinating policies and monitoring the implementation of the Convention. The inter-ministerial and inter-agency efforts also exemplify the Whole-of-Government approach in Singapore when considering disability matters.

SG Enable: An agency dedicated to enabling persons with disabilities

85. SGE is an agency dedicated to enabling persons with disabilities. The key functions of SGE are to provide information and referral services for child and adult disability services, administer grants and support to persons with disabilities and their caregivers, enhance employability and employment options for persons with disabilities and to rally stakeholder support in enabling persons with disabilities to integrate with the community at large.

[19] The Permanent Secretary is a public officer appointed by the President to head a ministry. He takes charge of the implementation of policies and programmes of his ministry, under the general direction and control of the Minister responsible.

Involvement in the Development, Implementation and Evaluation of Legislation and Policies in Relation to Disability Matters

86. MSF serves as the secretariat to the SCD, and is the national focal point for policy issues concerning persons with disabilities. MSF works closely with all government ministries, disability organisations and other agencies on issues relating to the interests of persons with disabilities. With respect to policy development, recommendations of the EM are formulated based on consultations with various stakeholders, including, persons with disabilities, their families, VWOs, employers, as well as professionals and practitioners in the field. In the lead up to the EM 2012-2016, nearly 200 participants (see **Annex D**) attended the 15 focus group discussions organised by NCSS and Centre for Enabled Living (CEL) (now SGE). Additionally, a dialogue session with more than 20 leaders of the social services for persons with disabilities sector was also conducted by Mr Sam Tan, then Senior Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports.

Dissemination of Information on the Convention

87. Following Singapore's signing and ratification of the Convention, press statements were released on 29 November 2012 and 19 July 2013 respectively. The statements highlighted the purpose of the Convention, and the efforts of various communities, organisations providing services and support to persons with disabilities, as well as persons with disabilities themselves.

88. Disability organisations and the members of the EMIC were briefed on the Convention. NCSS, which is the umbrella body for VWOs, including organisations providing services and support to persons with disabilities, also launched a year-long campaign — "We Are Able! Enhancing Possibilities, Celebrating Abilities" — as part of Singapore's efforts to raise awareness about the Convention and the EM. Details on the publicity of the Convention are discussed in other parts of the report.[20]

89. The NCSS also produced an easy-to-read guidebook which explained the articles in the Convention in language easily understood by the general public. As of September 2014, 22,000 copies of the guidebook have been distributed to VWOs, general public, schools, ministries and healthcare agencies. An e-book version was put on the NCSS website, while Braille copies and an audio version of the guidebook were produced and shared with persons with visual impairment.

90. Consultations and engagements are conducted through various platforms such as the EMIC and Disability Networks where relevant disability VWOs are updated on the latest news in the sector. Press statements are also released when there are new policies or programmes and schemes introduced by the Government for the benefit of persons with disabilities. As a city state with advanced technology and communications, using information technology platforms such as electronic mails and the internet facilitate the quick dissemination of information to various stakeholders.

Article 5 Equality and Non-Discrimination

Legal Framework to Ensure Equality and Non-Discrimination

91. In Singapore, all persons, including persons with disabilities, are equal before the law. The rights of persons with disabilities are protected under the Constitution as well as in other legislation like the Women's Charter and the Penal Code. All persons, including persons with disabilities, may apply to the High Court to seek judicial review where any legislation or policy contravenes the provisions of the Constitution.

92. Persons with disabilities can also report violations of the law to the relevant authorities which will look into the complaint, and take action to enforce the laws as appropriate. A police report can also be lodged by or on behalf of an affected victim.

[20] See Article 8 below

93. Should any person be of the view that their rights have been infringed, they may also seek assistance from free legal clinics or bring the matter before the courts. The Legal Aid Bureau administered by the Government, provides civil legal aid to all Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents, including persons with disabilities, who are not able to employ the services of lawyers to pursue their legal rights, when they fall within the requisite means and merits framework. Even where an applicant fails the maximum income criteria to obtain legal aid, the Director of the Legal Aid Bureau has the discretion to provide assistance if an applicant suffers from any sudden physical or mental disability which permanently and severely restricts their capacity to earn an income.[21]

94. The Law Society of Singapore, the professional representative body for lawyers in Singapore provides criminal legal aid through the Criminal Legal Aid Scheme in criminal cases. In the field of criminal law, all penal provisions apply equally to both persons with or without disabilities. Details on this are discussed in other parts of the report.[22]

Policies and Programmes to achieve and promote de facto Equality and Non-Discrimination

95. Singapore also adopts promotional and educational methods to help prevent discrimination of persons with disabilities at the workplace. The Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP) issued guidelines setting out fair and non-discriminatory employment practices for adoption by employers[23] which encourage employers to adopt progressive human resource management practices that benefit both employers and employees. Job seekers or employees who encounter discrimination due to their disability may also approach TAFEP for advice and assistance. In the public service, officers with disabilities can lodge complaints about unfair treatment to the independent Public Service Commission and through its various appeal mechanisms.

96. There are other channels for persons with disabilities and disability groups to reflect their views and complaints, including their views on the Convention. All Ministries and government agencies, including MSF and NCSS, have established formal channels for the public to raise complaints and to comment on policies that have an impact on them. All public complaints are recorded and the agencies' responses are monitored. Citizens can also write to the forum pages of local newspapers to express their views and debate policy issues. Disability issues and concerns are openly debated in Parliament.

97. REACH ("Reaching Everyone for Active Citizenry @ Home"), a public feedback division under the Ministry of Communications and Information, organises regular dialogue sessions, focus group discussions and Listening Points to actively obtain the public's views on policies and legislative changes. Members of the public, including persons with disabilities, can also share their views on REACH's online platforms which include a Discussion Forum and Facebook page. Between 2012 and 2014, REACH conducted public consultation exercises where disability matters were one of the focal areas. Persons with disabilities, their caregivers and activists participated in the exercises across digital and non-digital platforms. They voiced their feedback on some of the policy matters that impacted persons with disabilities, which the Government took into account when formulating some of the policy outcomes and measures mentioned in this report, such as increased healthcare subsidies for persons with disabilities, disabled-friendly facilities at all schools, public transport concessions for persons with disabilities and employment credits to employers who hire them.

98. To date, there has been no complaint of insufficient feedback channels available for persons with disabilities to challenge acts of discrimination.[24] Singapore will continue to

[21] Refer to Section 8(2)(b) of the Legal Aid and Advice Act (Cap 160), read together with paragraph 6, Second Schedule of said Act.

[22] See Articles 12 and 13 below.

[23] More information on TAFEP can be found here: https://www.tafep.sg/fair-employment-practices.

[24] Such issues can be raised with the Ministry of Social and Family Development or the NCSS, which is the umbrella body for voluntary welfare organisations in the social services sector. Additionally, the EM Implementation Committee is charged with the responsibility of monitoring and facilitating dialogue with members of the disability sector.

monitor closely and review this area if necessary. In its policy reviews, the Government takes a multi-stakeholder approach,[25] in order to ensure that its policies are inclusive and adequately take into account the needs of persons with disabilities.

99. Formulation of Policies and Programmes to ensure the interests of persons with disabilities are taken into account in the formulation and review of all its policies, Singapore adopts a multi-stakeholder approach which analyses the policy impact on affected groups. This encompasses taking a disability-sensitive perspective on issues that have differing impacts on vulnerable groups.

100. One example is the Vision 2030 Masterplan,[26] a strategic blueprint for sports development in Singapore, consolidating the views of people from all walks of life through a series of public engagements to find out their views on how sports can better serve Singapore in the coming decades. One of the key strategic themes that emerged from the visioning exercise was that of *Sports Without Boundaries*. This was premised on the vision that sports are inclusive and that there should be room for everyone who wants to play, regardless of their age, capabilities, gender or social status. In line with this strategic theme, sports policy-making would aim to provide everyone with the sports programming, physical space and support they need to pursue an active, healthy life through sports, by focusing on lowering barriers to entry for everyone, including persons with disabilities, to enable them to live better through sports.

101. Other specific policies and affirmative action measures taken by the Government to achieve de facto equality of persons with disabilities and to provide them with support and reasonable accommodation in their environment are set out under the relevant articles below.

Article 8 Awareness-raising

102. Singapore recognises that community acceptance is essential for the inclusion of persons with disabilities into society. Public education efforts need to be sustained and pervasive to ensure that the attitude of inclusiveness prevails in every strata and sector of society. NCSS conducted public education efforts before 2015 (see **Annex E**).

Disability Awareness Public Education Campaign from 2015

103. NCSS conducted several studies to guide the development of key messages for their 2015-2019 campaign, co-funded by the Singapore Totalisator Board:

- WHO Quality of Life survey to assess the quality of life in key domains, as experienced by persons with disabilities. About 1,000 participants were surveyed;
- Attitude Study to assess the current attitudes of the public towards persons with disabilities. About 1,400 people responded to the survey;
- At least 10 Focus Group Discussions (involving at least 80 persons with disabilities) were conducted on their vision for an inclusive community.

Enabling Employers Award

104. Incepted in 2007, the Enabling Employers Award is given out biennially to recognise employers of persons with disabilities, and celebrates both the achievements of inclusive employers and persons with disabilities who have excelled at their workplace. It is a nation-wide award organised by SGE and the Enabling Employers Network. The Network comprises of both private and public sector employers who champion and advance employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

[25] See Part I, paragraphs 3.17-3.9.

[26] The Vision 2030 Steering Committee Report 2012 can be found here: http://www.sportsingapore.gov.sg/~/media/corporate/files/about/vision%202030/livebetterthroughsportsv2030steeringcommitteereport2012.pdf.

Disability Etiquette

105. In July 2014, NCSS published a disability etiquette booklet, "Understanding Persons with Disabilities", detailing the Dos-and-Don'ts while interacting with persons with disabilities. The booklet was the first of its kind in Singapore and covered behavioural tips and general disability etiquette. The booklet was distributed to primary and secondary schools, VWOs, hospitals, ministries and private establishments, among others. A soft copy version of the booklet was made available on the NCSS website[27] and shared on the NCSS Facebook page. As of May 2016, more than 40,000 booklets have been distributed nationwide.

106. As at November 2015, about 30,000 copies of the booklet had been distributed to the public service agencies, schools and VWOs for use in raising awareness of how to interact with persons with disabilities. In addition, 8,000 copies of the booklet have been used for training volunteers, officials and people involved in the 2015 Para Games held in Singapore.

Public Education concerning Accessible Car Park lots

107. NCSS also works with the relevant agencies to run awareness raising campaigns to remind drivers to be gracious and leave Accessible Car Park lots for those who need it most. For example, from July 2015 to February 2016, the Government placed more than 5,000 posters at Accessible Car Park lots to remind drivers to be gracious and also ran radio advertisements in the four national languages to publicise this message.

Disability Awareness Campaign (November 2015)

108. NCSS also ran a month-long Disability Awareness Campaign in November 2015 to educate the public on interacting with persons with disabilities. The campaign posters featured four of Singapore's para-athletes: Yip Pin Xiu (Swimming), Muhammad Hidayat Bin Mohamad Yaakob (Goalball), Jovin Tan (Sailing) and Aishah Bte Samad (Shooting). The posters were placed mainly at train station premises and on social media such as Facebook.

"We Are Able! – Enhancing Possibilities, Celebrating Abilities" Campaign

109. The vision of an inclusive society for persons with disabilities is not one which can be achieved solely by the Government, but which requires each individual in society to play his or her part. Recognising that, NCSS launched the "We Are Able! – Enhancing Possibilities, Celebrating Abilities" Campaign in March 2013. The campaign aimed to raise public awareness about the abilities and contributions of persons with disabilities to society. It also encouraged the community, both persons with and without disabilities, to play their part in building an inclusive society. 26 champions, comprising VWOs representatives, persons with disabilities and business leaders, collaborated with NCSS on the campaign.

110. As part of the campaign, NCSS produced an easy-to-read guidebook which explained the articles in the Convention in language easily understood by the general public. As of September 2014, 22,000 copies of the guidebook have been distributed to VWOs, general public, schools, ministries and healthcare agencies. An e-book version was put on the NCSS website, while Braille copies and an audio version of the guidebook were produced and shared with persons with visual impairment. The campaign also engaged the community by encouraging the public to make a pledge of action in building an inclusive society through pledge cards and an online pledge website. 8,600 pledges were received.

111. The year-long campaign culminated in a conference on "Celebrating Abilities" and "Enhancing Possibilities" in January 2014. It rallied 340 participants, including persons with disabilities, caregivers, VWO staff, employers and policymakers, to play their part in enhancing possibilities for persons with disabilities and to celebrate their abilities. The keynote speaker, Mr Tony Christiansen, the first New Zealander with a disability to fly a

[27] The online version of the booklet "Understanding Persons with Disabilities" can be found here: https://www.ncss.gov.sg/documents/uncrpddocs/(Booklet)%20Understanding%20Persons%20with%20Disabilities.pdf.

plane solo, inspired persons with disabilities by demonstrating that they too can be successful in various aspects of life. Panel members from different segments of the community spoke of the importance of partnership between the people, private and public sectors to achieve an inclusive society. Panellists also shared their experiences and inspired persons with disabilities to contribute actively to the community. Participants applauded NCSS for being the first in Singapore to incorporate Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) or live captioning at a conference. The use of CART allowed participants with hearing difficulties to fully understand and participate in the conference proceedings.

The Purple Parade

112. From 2013, the annual Purple Parade, co-organised by the Autism Resource Centre, Central Community Development Council, NCSS and partner VWOs, supports inclusion and celebrates the abilities of persons with disabilities. 30 November 2013 was the first time in Singapore that 4,500 people from the public, private and people sectors came together in a show of solidarity for persons with disabilities. At the parade, the abilities of persons with disabilities were showcased through performances and activities (such as massage booths by persons with visual impairment and booths selling merchandise produced by persons with disabilities). The event also made its entry into the Singapore Book of Records for the largest logo made of pledge cards for the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

113. The Purple Parade subsequently attracted 5,000 and 7,000 participants in 2014 and 2015 respectively. The Purple Parade 2015 broke the Singapore Book of Records with 3,000 people donning purple spectacles together.[28] The Prime Minister of Singapore graced the event as the Guest of Honour for the 2015 event. A short video to promote the Purple Parade was also immensely popular, with more than 240,000 views and 2,200 shares.[29]

Riding on the Media

114. An increasing number of persons with disabilities are being featured in the Singapore media. There has been an increasing trend in television shows and webisodes (online videos) which challenge disability stereotypes by featuring the success of persons with disabilities as individuals who have many abilities and an indomitable spirit (see **Annex F**).

115. Persons with disabilities have also been celebrated for their abilities and work. For example, Ms Lily Goh who has hearing impairment and has started a social enterprise to promote arts, culture, heritage and language among the hearing impaired;[30] and Ms Cassandra Chiu, a person with visual impairment who runs her own counselling practice,[31] were winners of the Singapore Women's Award in 2014 and 2012 respectively.

Article 9 Accessibility

Accessibility in the Built Environment

The Accessibility Master Plan

116. To create an inclusive built environment and to support ageing-in-place, the first Accessibility Master Plan was developed in 2006 to address accessibility issues through a systematic and holistic approach. Representatives from the government and private

[28] Source: http://news.asiaone.com/news/singapore/3000-don-purple-spectacles-cause-singapore

[29] The short promotional video for Purple Parade can be found here: https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=1678918652322249&set=vb.141612773526801O&type=2&theater

[30] More details of Ms Lily Goh can be found here: http://www16.mediacorp.sg/swa/bio_lilygoh.html

[31] More details of Ms Cassandra Chiu can be found here: http://www16.mediacorp.sg/swa/bio_cassandrachiu.html

corporations collaborated with communities and members of the public (commonly known as the public, private and people sectors) to develop the Accessibility Master Plan to facilitate progressive improvements for an inclusive built environment. The Accessibility Master Plan is not a static document; improvements were made to the Accessibility Master Plan in 2008 and 2012, to take into account the growing and changing needs of the community.

117. The Accessibility Master Plan plays an instrumental role in our vision for a liveable City for All Ages, and in fulfilling our nation's obligations under the Convention.

118. The Accessibility Master Plan addresses accessibility issues through the four strategic thrusts:

- Addressing future challenges upstream;
- Mitigating existing challenges;
- Maintaining accessible infrastructure; and
- Developing awareness and capability of the industry and stakeholders.

The Code on Barrier-Free Accessibility in Buildings 1990

119. In May 1989, legal requirements to provide facilities and amenities in buildings to meet the reasonable needs of persons with mobility difficulties were introduced under the Building Control Regulations. All new buildings and buildings undergoing major retrofitting works were required to provide accessibility to persons with disabilities in accordance with the Code on Barrier-Free Accessibility in Buildings 1990.

120. In addition, BCA continually seeks to improve the design of new buildings and infrastructure so that the built environment is seamlessly connected and accessible to the elderly, families with children and persons with disabilities, by promoting the adoption of UD and periodically reviewing the Accessibility Code to raise the minimum standard in the built environment and update the provisions to meet the needs of the future. For example, new requirements such as tactile and braille signs for persons with visual impairment, hearing enhancement systems for persons with hearing impairment and wider corridors have been introduced in the current Code on Accessibility in the Built Environment 2013.[32]

121. The Code was reviewed by a committee that comprises representatives from the public, private and people sectors. To ensure that the provisions of the Code would meet the needs of the users, particularly persons with disabilities, user-consultation sessions and user trials were conducted to validate some of the clauses. Consultations with persons with disabilities have gone a long way in establishing understanding and trust between the users, the regulators and the developers.

Upgrading of Existing Buildings

122. Despite the considerable improvement in accessibility in buildings since the implementation of the Code on Barrier-Free Accessibility in Buildings 1990, the Government recognised that a large stock of pre-1990 buildings which did not meet the accessibility requirements remained. To address this, a 10-year Barrier-Free Accessibility Upgrading Programme (2007-2016) was put in place to support the upgrading of existing buildings.

123. BCA had formulated a set of basic accessibility features that could be incorporated into existing buildings with minimal cost for voluntary upgrading. These basic provisions will make an existing building accessible, at the least at the ground level. Therefore, in consultation with end-user organisations,[33] the following basic accessibility requirements were determined:

[32] Since 2007, the Code on Barrier-Free Accessibility in Buildings was renamed to Code on Accessibility in the Built Environment to include accessibility in the whole built environment.

[33] The voluntary welfare organisations involved were the Handicaps Welfare Association and the Singapore Action Group of Elders (ceased operation in mid-July 2012).

- Accessible approach to building;
- Accessibility at ground level; and
- Accessible toilet at the ground level (including reduced size toilet for building with site constraints).

124. To incentivise the upgrading of existing private buildings, a S$40-million (USD$28.6million) Accessibility Fund was set up in 2007 to help defray the cost of upgrading. The Fund was extended for another 5 years to 2017. It co-pays up to 80% of the cost for providing basic accessibility features to existing private buildings, such as commercial and institutional buildings, subject to a cap of S$300,000 (USD$214,286) per project. The Fund is also used to upgrade all key areas and essential facilities in Singapore to provide at least basic accessibility by 2016. As of June 2016, 135 buildings have been upgraded under the scheme. This includes hotels, commercial and religious buildings.

Public Sector Buildings Upgrading Programme

125. Since 2006, BCA has actively followed up with public sector agencies on their upgrading efforts to ensure that they are on target with scheduled timeframes. As at 2012, close to 100% of buildings that are frequented by the general public are minimally provided with basic accessibility outlined in paragraph 4.8. Examples of such buildings are community clubs, government offices, including our Parliament House, hospitals/polyclinics, libraries, Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) train stations, bus interchanges/terminals, sport facilities, markets and food centres among many others.

Public Housing

126. The Housing and Development Board (HDB) also has various programmes to upgrade the existing public housing and communal areas.[34] The programmes include:

Lift Upgrading Programme

127. This 13-year programme brings direct lift access to older HDB flats, where feasible. The scope of works include the upgrading of existing lifts, providing a lift landing on every floor and adding of new lifts and lift shafts. This programme has benefitted some 500,000 households from 5,000 blocks.

Barrier-free Access Upgrading Programme

128. Under this programme, HDB worked with various Town Councils and government agencies such as the Land Transport Authority (LTA), the National Parks Board (NParks) and the Public Utilities Board, Singapore's national water agency, to make all HDB estates barrier-free for residents' benefit and convenience. The upgrading works, completed in mid-2012 involved:

- Retrofitting existing estates with barrier-free features such as ramps, railings and levelling of steps for enhanced accessibility;
- Improving connectivity between building blocks, key precinct facilities and amenities; and
- Linking access routes to traffic crossings and transportation nodes.

Accessibility of Public Transport System

129. LTA has also been carrying out programmes for public transport, infrastructure and facilities.

[34] As noted in paragraph 2.7 in Part I above, over 80% of the population lives in public housing built by HDB.

Train system

130. Since 2006, all our train stations have been equipped with at least one barrier-free entrance with a lift, tactile guidance system on the floor for persons with visual impairments and wheelchair-accessible toilets. More than 85% of all existing train stations[35] have two barrier-free access routes from the station entrance to the station concourse.[36] In addition, all trains have a dedicated space with hand rails for wheelchairs in the centre carriage near the train door. Train stations are also equipped with plasma displays, indicating the destination and estimated arrival times of the next two trains at each platform.

131. To assist persons with hearing disabilities, the trains are also equipped with dynamic route maps above all doors, indicating the train service's direction of travel, the upcoming stations, the terminal and interchange stations, as well as the side at which the doors will open. There are also additional multi-coloured LED displays mounted on the ceiling of train carriages, which provide multi-language transcripts of all audio announcements and lights at each door to indicate the closing of doors. For persons with visual disabilities, multi-language audio announcements are provided at all stations and trains to notify passengers of the current and upcoming station, closing doors, safety and other important passenger information.[37]

Bus system

132. All new public buses registered since 2006 must be wheelchair-accessible. Today, 85% of Singapore's public buses are wheelchair accessible.

133. Upgrading works have been completed to enhance the bus shelters to be barrier-free. Currently, 96% of our bus shelters and all bus interchanges have been upgraded to become barrier-free. For the remaining bus stops, which have site constraints, LTA will start implementing site-specific solutions from 2016 to upgrade them.

Airport

134. Changi Airport's infrastructure efforts to facilitate accessibility by persons with disabilities within the airport are in accordance with BCA's Code on Accessibility in the Built Environment. To further facilitate air travel for passengers with disabilities, the Ministry of Transport and the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore work with stakeholders to ensure the implementation of relevant measures based on international practices. For instance, Changi Airport provides mobility aids such as wheelchairs and strollers to passengers with reduced mobility to facilitate their movement within the airport.

Ferry Terminals and Cruise Centres

135. Since 2012, all of Singapore's ferry terminals and cruise centres are also in compliance with BCA's Code on Accessibility in the Built Environment which ensures that the fundamental design and construction requirements are in compliance with the guidelines for making buildings accessible to persons with disabilities.

Accessibility in the Road Infrastructure

Lifts at overhead bridges

136. In order to enhance barrier free accessibility, overhead bridges near selected train stations[38] have been retrofitted with lifts and an estimated 40 additional overhead bridges will be retrofitted by 2018 to be wheel-chair accessible.

[35] 87 of our existing 101 MRT stations.

[36] However, there is only one barrier-free route from the station concourse to the station platform due to space constraints within the station.

[37] More information on the equipment of trains are available at: http://www.sgtrains.com/technology-infosys.html.

[38] These stations are Bishan, Kranji, Aljunied, Sengkang, Yew Tee and Khatib.

Green Man+ (GM+)

137. The GM+ scheme allows senior citizens and persons with disabilities who hold public transport concession cards to enjoy longer crossing times at traffic junctions by tapping their cards on readers mounted above the standard push button on traffic light poles. Presently, the GM+ can be found at 508 pedestrian crossings in housing estates.

Audible Pedestrian Signal (APS)

138. The APS is a device installed at pedestrian crossings[39] to assist pedestrians with visual impairments to cross the road safely. During the red-man phase, the APS emits a tone to assist users to locate and activate the push-button. When the pedestrian crossing signal turns green, the APS emits a different tone to alert users to cross and the tone changes to a faster repetition rate when the green man signal is flashing, to indicate that the signal is about to change to the red-man phase. The APS devices are installed at pedestrian crossings based on requests from individuals who have visual impairments or from the Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped.

Accessibility in Schools and Institutes of Higher Learning

139. All schools and Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) have to comply with the building regulations and standards put in place by the BCA, which include minimum accessibility standards. All primary and secondary mainstream schools in Singapore are equipped with basic accessibility facilities, which include ground-floor toilets and ramps for wheelchair users. Many schools are undergoing upgrading to be equipped with full accessibility facilities. These schools are geographically dispersed across our small island, so that all students with physical disabilities are able to access such schools easily. Similarly, our IHLs are continually upgrading their facilities to enhance accessibility.

Accessibility of Public Park Facilities

140. The Government has also sought to ensure accessibility of Public Park Facilities. To this end, NParks has carried out progressive improvement works to enhance accessibility of existing parks. With respect to new parks and park connectors or older parks undergoing redevelopment, NParks applies UD principles:

- For existing parks: Progressive improvement works carried out to enhance accessibility;
- For new parks and park connectors, as well as older parks undergoing redevelopment: Application of UD principles in its design of toilets and paths as well as material selection; and
- Development of park design guidelines, jointly with BCA, for inclusion in the revised Code on Accessibility in the Built Environment as an appendix.

Access to facilities such as *Financial Banking*

141. The Post Office Savings Bank, one of the local banks, has also worked with the Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped to include accessible functions to Automated Teller Machines (ATMs). The accommodations include functions such as Braille instructions and audio guidance which help persons with visual impairments perform basic ATM transactions independently.

[39] A signalised pedestrian crossing comprises a pair of traffic light signals — one on each side of the road.

Ensuring maintenance of accessible infrastructure

142. To ensure that accessible facilities provided continue to be available for their intended use and are not removed or altered (e.g. using the accessible toilet for storage or converting an accessible parking lot to a normal parking lot), the Building Control Act was amended in 2008 to allow for enforcement action to be taken against persons who fail to maintain the facilities in a useable condition.

Promoting Universal Design

143. In addition to enhancing the regulatory requirements on accessibility, principles of UD were also actively promoted through various training initiatives and programmes. They include the publication of two UD guides, organising of seminars, training courses and BCA's UD Award and UD Mark Certification.

144. To engage stakeholders, various promotion and training activities to raise awareness and build capabilities of industry practitioners, developers, building owners and the general public were carried out. The various initiatives are in **Annex G**.

Community Outreach

145. The Friendly Built Environment Portal (www.friendlybuildings.sg) was launched in 2008 to provide a virtual one-stop portal containing information on UD and Accessibility for both the professional and the general public. One of the key features of this Portal is the Accessibility Rating System (ARS) which lists local buildings frequented by the public and rates them according to their level of user-friendliness. As part of the "Nurturing the Young" programme, interns from tertiary institutions and junior colleges are trained in UD and help to audit buildings (see **Annex G**).

Capability Building

146. BCA rolls out courses and seminars at the BCA Academy to provide a tiered and structured training to all stakeholders in the construction value chain, including architects, developers, building owners, builders and facility managers. The UD Assessor Course was launched in 2012 to improve the industry's understanding of physical disabilities and the application of UD principles in buildings. BCA engaged a lecturer with visual impairment and 2 trainers who are wheel-chair users to deliver the training programme. According to the feedback from course attendees, the programme left a long-lasting impression and invoked a strong sense of empathy in the course attendees.

147. BCA also organises overseas study trips with the industry stakeholders, public agencies, VWOs and academia for collaborative learning.

Article 10 Right to Life

148. The Singapore Constitution specifically provides in Article 9 that "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty save in accordance with law." In Singapore, the right to life applies with equal force to all persons, including persons with disabilities.

149. Euthanasia and assisted suicide are illegal in Singapore. Disability alone is also not a permissible reason for the activation of an Advance Medical Directive not to subject a patient to extraordinary life-sustaining treatment. Such a Directive may only take effect in the event of "terminal illness", which applies equally to persons with or without disabilities. "Terminal illness" is defined in the Advance Medical Directive Act as an incurable condition caused by injury or disease from which there is no reasonable prospect of a temporary or permanent recovery and where death would be imminent, regardless of the

application of extraordinary life-sustaining treatment and where such application would only serve to postpone the moment of death of the patient.[40] Section 17 of the Act explicitly states Singapore's position against euthanasia and does not condone or approve abetment of suicide, mercy killing or euthanasia. Furthermore, under the Mental Capacity Act, the decision maker must not be motivated by a desire to bring about the death of the person, when deciding that person's best interests in relation to life sustaining treatment.[41] These provisions reflect our laws which prohibit euthanasia, assisted suicide and murder, regardless of whether the person concerned has disabilities, and ensure that persons with disabilities will not be subject to arbitrary deprivation of life.

150. Singapore recognises that suicide has many causes and can be prevented. Government agencies have worked closely with VWOs to put in place efforts in public education, prevention and support. The Health Promotion Board (HPB) has a peer support programme which trains selected tertiary students on mental health issues such as suicide prevention and peer support skills to reach out to their schoolmates. Active ageing programmes to promote an active lifestyle and encourage socialisation are also useful to support our elderly. There are also helplines available for people in crisis or thinking of suicide or affected by suicide. The Samaritans of Singapore is a suicide prevention centre in Singapore which provides a 24-hour confidential emotional support to people. The Samaritans of Singapore receives community funding and also undertakes regular public education efforts to raise public understanding on suicides and the available avenues for help.

151. The legal regime set out under the Termination of Pregnancy Act applies equally to all pregnant women and does not draw any distinctions on the basis of potential disability in an unborn child. Before twenty-four completed weeks of gestation, a woman may legally obtain an abortion.

152. To aid women in making a considered decision, pre-abortion counselling must be provided for all pregnant women seeking termination of pregnancy in Singapore. Such counselling seeks to provide holistic information (including the medical procedures involved, potential risks and after-effects of having the termination of pregnancy).

153. Singapore has set a limit of twenty-four gestational weeks, which is generally regarded as a point of foetal viability (i.e. likelihood of survival) outside the womb. Singapore continues to monitor and evaluate this position as and when new evidence emerges.

154. However, if an abortion is immediately necessary to save the life of the pregnant woman or to prevent grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman, the abortion may be carried out at any point beyond 24 weeks of pregnancy with the written consent of the pregnant woman, except in situations of medical emergencies where consent may not be possible. A disability of the unborn child alone is not a reason that would permit an abortion beyond twenty-four weeks of gestation.

Article 11 Situations of Risk and Humanitarian Emergencies

155. The Singapore Government treats the protection and safety of persons with disabilities as an essential part of its policies and regulatory framework on emergency management.

[40] More details of the Advance Medical Directive can be found on the Law Society website (accessible at http://www.lawsociety.org.sg/forPublic/YouthelLaw/AdvanceMedicalDirective.aspx).

[41] Section 6(5) of the Mental Capacity Act. More information is available on the website of the Public Guardian (accessible at https://www.publicguardian.gov.sg/opg/Lists/Guides/Attachments/1/[EN]%20COP_3%20Apr%202014.pdf).

Fire Safety Requirements

156. Existing fire safety requirements under the Fire Code[42] include the need to facilitate the evacuation of persons with disabilities in non-residential buildings (see **Annex H**).

157. In 2013, the Fire Code was revised and now requires designated locations in non-residential buildings to also have a visual alarm in the form of a strobe or flashing light devices. This alerts persons with hearing impairments of the emergency situation.

Emergency within Tunnels

158. Traffic Marshals have been trained to assist persons with disabilities to evacuate from emergency situations within road tunnels. As for emergencies or incidents on the public transport system, staff of the public transport operator would be on site to render assistance to persons with disabilities. For example, if passengers have to disembark a train onto the track for evacuation, such staff would guide commuters and duly assist individuals who require more support.

Emergency Causing Displacement

159. Where a disaster causes persons to be displaced from their place of residence, they will be accorded relief, welfare and social support by MSF. In doing so, MSF will also take into account the needs of persons with disabilities. For example, temporary shelters for persons rendered homeless because of disaster will be designed to be accessible to persons with disabilities. This includes, as far as practicable, providing persons with disability with additional space in their sleeping area for their comfort and to accommodate any caregiver, as well as locating their sleeping area in a way that allows them space to better manoeuvre and access various facilities in the temporary shelter, such as toilets and the dining area. In doing so, MSF will also take into account the needs of persons with disabilities.

Article 12 Equal Recognition before the Law

Equal Recognition before the Law for Persons with Disabilities

160. Article 12 of the Constitution of Singapore states that 'all persons are equal before the law and entitled to the equal protection of the law.' This right to equality applies to all persons, including persons with disabilities.

Legal Capacity of Persons with Disabilities

161. Under Singapore law, all persons, including persons with disabilities, are presumed to have capacity unless it is established that they lack capacity in accordance with the principles laid out in paragraphs 1.12-1.13 of this Part. Persons with disabilities therefore enjoy the same legal capacity as persons without disabilities, including equal rights to maintain their physical and mental integrity, participation as citizens, own or inherit property, to control their own financial affairs and to have equal access to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit, and their right not to be arbitrarily deprived of their property.

162. The Mental Capacity Act provides the legal framework for empowering and protecting *all* persons, including persons with disabilities, who lack the mental capacity to make decisions for themselves. Such persons are provided support to enable them to make

[42] Fire safety standards for buildings in Singapore are governed by the Code of Practice for Fire Precautions in Buildings, better known as the Fire Code. The Fire Code serves as an authoritative source on fire safety standards for local buildings and is used by the building industry in designing fire safety works in buildings.

as many of their own decisions as possible. The Act also seeks to ensure that any decisions made on behalf of persons with disabilities must be in their best interest.[43] The mental capacity of a person is not determined by whether or not he has a disability, but by whether he is unable to make decisions for himself in relation to particular matters because of an impairment of, or a disturbance in the functioning of, his mind or brain.[44]

Supported Decision-Making Models

163. The Act also empowers individuals who think they might lose capacity to make their own decisions in the future, to plan ahead by executing a Lasting Power of Attorney to appoint a proxy decision maker in respect of his personal welfare and financial matters. In cases where a person has not appointed a proxy decision-maker before losing capacity, the Court may appoint such a proxy decision-maker to take decisions in the person's best interests. The Act also enables parents of a child with intellectual disabilities to apply to court to appoint a person to make decisions on the child's welfare and financial matters.

164. Singapore placed a reservation on Article 12(4), which requires State Parties to regularly review the decisions made on behalf of persons with disabilities. Singapore does not prescribe regular reviews of decisions made under a Lasting Power of Attorney to avoid undermining the assumption of trust and goodwill and to encourage reliance on the social bond between the principal and his proxy decision-maker. However, there are adequate safeguards in the Act which protect these vulnerable members of our society by limiting the acts or decisions of a proxy decision-maker and by providing powers to the Public Guardian to investigate complaints of abuse of authority by proxy decision-makers. The Act also provides whistle-blower protection for those who report abuse.

165. Firstly, there are limits to the acts or decisions that a proxy decision-maker may do or decide. For example, he may not do an act intended to restrain the principal, unless such an act is necessary to prevent harm to the principal and the act is proportionate to the likelihood and seriousness of the harm. Certain decisions such as those involving the provision of life-sustaining treatment and provision of treatment which a health care provider reasonably believes is necessary to prevent a serious deterioration in the principal's health, are outside the scope of a proxy decision-maker's powers. There are also additional restrictions and requirements in relation to the disposition of property.

166. Secondly, the court may request checks to be run on proxy decision-makers appointed by it and may call for records and documents from such persons.[45] Complaints about the way a proxy decision-maker is carrying out his duties are also duly investigated. Where appropriate, a court application will be made to protect a person who lacks capacity.[46]

Government Support and Subsidies for Persons with Disabilities to Ensure Accessibility and Affordability of Services

167. The Government also provides support and subsidies to ensure that persons with disabilities are given practical access to the measures and services available to them. They recognise that families or caregivers may wish to provide specifically for the long-term financial needs of persons with disabilities under their care, for the time when such families or caregivers are no longer around.

[43] Sections 3(3), 3(5) and 5(2) of the Mental Capacity Act (Cap. 177A, 2010 Rev. Ed. Sg.).

[44] Section 4(1) of the Mental Capacity Act (Cap. 177A, 2010 Rev. Ed. Sg.). For more information on how the ability to make a decision is assessed, see section 5 of the aforementioned Act.

[45] These checks are conducted by the Office of the Public Guardian, constituted under the Mental Capacity Act to, amongst other things, supervise court-appointed proxy decision-makers and deal with any representations (including complaints) about the way proxy decision-makers exercise their powers (see section 31 of the Act).

[46] Mental Capacity Act s6 (5) in https://www.publicguardian.gov.sg/opg/Lists/Guides/Attachments/1/[EN]%20COP_3%20Apr%202014.pdf.

168. The Special Needs Trust Company (SNTC) was set up in 2008/09 jointly by the Government and the NCSS to provide trust management services for families of persons with disabilities. It raises awareness of the need for long-term financial planning and provides an avenue for parents and caregivers to do so, and an infrastructure to ensure that persons with disabilities receive the gifts under the parents' will, insurance and CPF savings nomination. In addition to setting up the trust account, SNTC also works with the caregivers of persons with disabilities to develop care plans and record how the trust funds are to be used when the caregiver is no longer around. The Public Trustee holds and invests the trust funds and the principal sum is guaranteed by the Government. To ensure that this financial service is made accessible and affordable to these families, the costs of setting up a trust account with the SNTC are subsidised up to 90% by the Government.

169. From 1 August 2014, SNTC also manages the Special Needs Saving Scheme (established in February 2012), which enables parents to set aside CPF savings for the long term care of children with disabilities. Under this scheme, parents can nominate their children with disabilities to receive a regular stream of fixed payouts upon the parent's demise. As at November 2015, there were over 350 trust accounts and 300 applications for the Special Needs Savings Scheme set up with SNTC.

Article 13 Access to justice

170. Singapore is committed to the protection of vulnerable individuals of society and has put in place measures to enable persons with disabilities to have effective access to justice on an equal basis with other persons.

Safeguards for Persons with Disabilities in the Criminal Investigation Process

171. The Committee for Assisting Offenders with Mental Disabilities, chaired by the Attorney-General's Chambers, was formed to look into safeguards for persons with disabilities in the criminal investigation process. The committee includes representatives from the Association of Criminal Lawyers of Singapore, the Singapore Police Force, the Law Society of Singapore, MSF and NCSS. Some of the initiatives implemented include the screening test known as the Hayes Ability Screening Index and the activation of an 'Appropriate Adult' to assist persons with disabilities during police interviews.

172. The Appropriate Adult Scheme was introduced with the aim of assisting persons with mental intellectual disabilities who come into contact with the police. Singapore recognises that persons with disabilities may be especially vulnerable to experiencing distress during police investigations and may, in particular, have difficulties communicating facts during police interviews. Under this Scheme, trained volunteers, otherwise known as Appropriate Adults, are present during the police interview to provide support to persons with disabilities, including bridging communication gaps with the Police and providing emotional support to persons with disabilities. Since January 2015, the Scheme has been implemented in all Police Divisions across Singapore.

173. In recognition of the vulnerability of offenders with intellectual disabilities, there are measures in place to provide them with additional support and minimize any possible trauma experienced during police investigations. Police officers are also trained to be sensitised to assess the mental and intellectual disabilities of an accused person when conducting interviews and to activate an Appropriate Adult to provide support to the accused person where necessary. Police officers are also given sensitisation training on victim management, so as to equip them to manage victims, including those with mental and intellectual disabilities.

Measures to ensure Child- and Disability-Sensitive Legal Proceedings

174. For this purpose, child-sensitive and disability-sensitive legal proceedings have been instituted in various government agencies.

175. For instance, the courts have initiated the Vulnerable Witness Support Programme. All vulnerable witnesses, which include persons who are aged below 18 years, or persons with a mental capacity of under 18 years of age, are accompanied by a Volunteer Support Person while giving evidence in criminal cases in court. The Volunteer Support Person will not only inform the witness, their parents or caregivers about the court procedures, but also provide social, emotional and practical support to affected parties.

176. The Singapore Supreme Court and State Courts also allow the use of sign language in court and will provide a sign language interpreter free of charge where required.

177. Juvenile offenders can be tried in the Youth Court, which provides a range of community based rehabilitation options which enable rehabilitation efforts to be tailored according to the specific needs of the child, taking into account his or her disability,[47] so as to safeguard the child's best interests.

Diversionary Programmes and Rehabilitation for Persons with Disabilities

178. There are various efforts by Singapore to rehabilitate offenders with disabilities, including diversionary programmes in lieu of prosecution, targeted rehabilitation during probation and other sentencing options such as mandatory temporary stays at Youth Homes.

179. The Government works with several VWOs to carry out the Guidance Programme, which gives first-time youth offenders a chance to undergo six-month' rehabilitation in lieu of prosecution in court. This programme has been customised to also meet the needs of low-risk youth offenders with intellectual disabilities. The programme comprises counselling, group work and other activities aimed at addressing offending behaviours and imparting life skills, and aims to reduce their risks of re-offending. Over 20 youth offenders with intellectual disabilities have benefitted from this programme since 2007.

180. When offenders are charged in court, the court is empowered to take into account the special conditions of offenders, such as their mental or medical conditions, in determining their sentence and any associated rehabilitation programme. A social report will be furnished to the court on the factors contributing to the offence, risk of reoffending and potential for community-based rehabilitation. Some examples of court orders where the special conditions of offenders are taken into account, are probation and mandatory treatment orders (which require a convicted offender to undergo psychiatric treatment for a period not exceeding 24 months).

181. Offenders with intellectual disabilities under a probation order by the court would receive targeted intervention that caters to their special needs. These may include specialised counselling services from psychologists, social skills training and guidance in educational or vocational development. Those who have committed sexual offences may also undergo a Basic Education & Sexuality Treatment programme, which aims to increase the social functioning of such offenders and thereby reduces their risk of re-offending. There are also programmes specifically tailored to meet the unique needs of probationers with physical disabilities, on a case by case basis, to promote inclusiveness and integration. For instance, those with hearing impairments will be supervised by Probation Officers skilled in sign language. Probation Officers also work closely with community-based agencies that offer specialised services for probationers to effect a rehabilitation plan that will help them integrate better with the larger community.

182. Youth Homes which temporarily house young offenders under a court order will also make appropriate provisions for residents with disabilities, to ensure their continued mobility and to support their ADLs. Upon the completion of their court-mandated stay, such young offenders with disabilities would be linked to agencies, such as SGE, to support their reintegration into the community.

[47] Probation, Community Service Order (Stand-alone), Weekend Detention (Stand-alone or with Probation), Probation with Detention, Detention Order, Juvenile Rehabilitation Centre Order.

Legal Aid to Ensure Access to Legal Advice

183. As mentioned in paragraph 2.4, the Legal Aid Bureau provides civil legal aid to all Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents, including persons with disabilities, who are otherwise financially unable to employ the services of lawyers to pursue meritorious claims. The Law Society of Singapore also provides criminal legal aid, with partial funding from the Government, to accused persons without the financial means to engage defence counsel through the Criminal Legal Aid Scheme.

Article 14 Liberty and Security of the Person

184. Part IV of the Constitution specifically provides for the fundamental liberties of persons, including persons with disabilities. Article 9(1) of our Constitution states that "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty save in accordance with law." In Singapore, this right applies with equal force to all persons, including persons with disabilities.

185. Article 9(2) states that where a complaint is made to the High Court that a person is being unlawfully detained, the Court shall order him/her to be produced before the Court and released, unless the detention is lawful. These are safeguards in our Constitution against unlawful or arbitrary deprivation of liberty. Article 9(3) of the Constitution also provides that a person shall be informed as soon as may be of the grounds for arrest and shall be allowed to consult and be defended by a legal practitioner of choice. The person arrested has to be produced before a Magistrate within 48 hours. The Court shall inquire into the complaint and, unless satisfied that the detention is lawful, shall order him to be produced before the Court and release him.

186. The wrongful confinement of a person is an offence punishable by fine and imprisonment under the Penal Code. It is also an offence under the Penal Code for anyone to cause hurt to or wrongfully confine a person for the purpose of extorting a confession or any information, which may lead to the detection of an offence.

187. As noted in Article 13, Singapore law and policy provides for extensive support for persons with disabilities in the course of criminal investigations and proceedings and also allows judges to take into account the special conditions of offenders, including any disability they may have, when determining their sentence and suitability for any rehabilitation programmes. In addition, as detailed above, the Government also provides diversionary programmes tailored to the needs of offenders with intellectual disabilities.

188. All prison inmates, including those with disabilities, are housed in units where they have ready access to medical personnel and are able to have their medical needs attended to. Where necessary, prison doctors will also admit such inmates into medical wards for closer monitoring. Prison inmates with disabilities are accorded the same privileges as other inmates, including out-of-cell activities. Where possible, prison inmates with physical disabilities are housed at lower landings to reduce the need to traverse stairs. Suitable cellmates may also be selected as helpers to assist inmates with disabilities in their daily activities.

Article 15 Freedom from Torture or Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

189. The Singapore Government is committed to preventing and condemning torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in its various forms against all persons including persons with disabilities. Our society does not condone torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Singapore's domestic legislation strictly prohibits causing harm to the body with criminal intent. Our security agencies have strict guidelines governing the conduct of their officers. Singapore has worked with the international community to condemn and prevent torture.

Clinical Trials

190. In Singapore, clinical trials are regulated to ensure that participants, including those with disabilities, in clinical trials are protected. The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) regulates the conduct of clinical drug trials in Singapore under the Medicines Act and Medicines (Clinical Trials) Regulations. Before a clinical drug trial can be conducted in Singapore, it is necessary to obtain both ethics approval from the hospital's Institutional Review Board and regulatory approval from HSA. In order to receive regulatory approval from HSA, companies must provide relevant evidence of the safety of the investigational drug and that the design and conduct of the trial provide adequate levels of protection for participants.

191. Companies or research institutions sponsoring clinical drug trials and doctors conducting them are also expected to abide by the Singapore Guideline for Good Clinical Practice. This is based on international ethical and scientific quality standards and seeks to ensure that the participants' rights and interests are adequately protected, that they are not exposed to undue risk, and the safety and efficacy data generated from the research is valid and accurate.

192. The Medicines (Clinical Trials) regulations requires consent to be obtained from every participant in a clinical trial. For persons who are unconscious or incapable of exercising rational judgement, the regulations provide additional safeguards, requiring (1) an independent doctor to certify both the person's incapacity to exercise rational judgement, and that the person is not likely to regain consciousness or be capable of exercising rational judgment, and (2) consent from the person's proxy decision-maker, acting in the best interests of that person and (3) the existence of a reasonable prospect that participation in the clinical trial will directly benefit that person.[48]

193. Singapore law also seeks to protect persons with disabilities who depend on support in exercising their legal capacity from having their body or any part thereof used without their free and informed consent. For example, the Mental Capacity Act does not allow proxies acting on behalf of persons lacking the mental capacity to make or revoke a gift of a body or any part thereof or to make or revoke an advance medical directive.[49]

Article 16 Freedom from Exploitation, Violence and Abuse

194. All persons in Singapore are entitled to protection against exploitation, violence and abuse in Singapore, including persons with disabilities. Additional safeguards are also in place to take care of persons who are particularly vulnerable, such as women, children, the aged and persons with disabilities.

Measures to Protect Children with Disabilities

Singapore's Child Protection System

195. The Singapore Government has sought to put in place a comprehensive Child Protection System, which involves government agencies working closely with key stakeholders in the child protection system such as the health, social services, education and law enforcement sectors to ensure the effective prevention and management of child abuse in Singapore. This includes effective detection, and incisive investigations into allegations of abuse and supporting victims and their families. A range of services is also available to aid the child's recovery and the ability of their caregivers to provide safe care to the child. Perpetrators of abuse are duly dealt with through the criminal justice process. Details of our

[48] A clinical trial shall only be taken to hold out any reasonable prospect of direct benefit to a subject if there is supporting evidence from appropriate animal and other pre-clinical studies and risks associated with the clinical trial are reasonable in relation to what is known about the medical condition of the subject, taking into account the risks and benefits of standard therapy and the proposed use of the test material.

[49] Section 26 of the Mental Capacity Act (Cap. 177A, 2010 Rev. Ed. Sg.).

measures to protect children with disabilities, prevent and aid in the detection of child abuse are in **Annex I**.

Legislative Protection of Children against Violence, Abuse and Exploitation

196. There are several legislative measures to protect all children and young persons, including those with disabilities, from violence, abuse and exploitation. The Children and Young Persons Act, Women's Charter and Penal Code continue to provide safeguards and stiff penalties against the abuse of children.

197. The Children and Young Persons Act provides for the welfare, protection and rehabilitation of children and young persons from ill-treatment, neglect, exploitation and abuse. Such actions may also constitute offences under the Penal Code. The Act also requires that the Courts consider the welfare of each child brought before the Courts, whether they are child victims in need of protection or juveniles in conflict with the law. The protector of children will initiate care and protection proceedings on behalf of a child so that decisions on a child's safety and well-being can be made. These decisions will be based on social investigations, interventions and assessments by the relevant professionals.

198. The Women's Charter (Cap. 353) also accords additional protection to women and girls below 21 years of age who are in moral danger and protects them against sexual exploitation. The Women's Charter also spells out responsibilities of parents in relation to the care of their children. It also provides for the protection of family members (including children) from family violence.

199. To combat child sex tourism, the Penal Code was revised in 2008 to prohibit persons from obtaining commercial sex from a minor both in and outside of Singapore and arranging tours overseas for such purposes.[50] The sexual exploitation of a child or young person is also criminalized under section 7 of the Children and Young Persons Act and the production, distribution and possession of obscene material, including pornographic material, is prohibited under the Films Act and the Undesirable Publications Act.

Adults with Disabilities

Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons

200. Singapore provides extensive protection for women and children against commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking through the Penal Code, the Women's Charter, the Children and Young Persons Act and the more recent Prevention of Human Trafficking Act. The law prohibits acts to procure, intimidate, harbour or detain any woman or girl for the purposes of prostitution.

201. Most recently, Singapore has enacted the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act, which criminalises exploitation in the form of sex, labour and organ trafficking and equips agencies with the necessary intervention levers to combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP) offences. This new Act adopts the definition of TIP used in the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. It also provides a framework for appropriate penalties that reflects the severity of TIP offences. The Act came into force in March 2015.

202. The above legislation accords protection to victims, regardless of the presence of any disability.

203. Singapore law enables us to target traffickers who operate from overseas as well. The laws on abetment and criminal conspiracy cover all acts leading up to the commission of the primary offence in Singapore, even if such acts were committed overseas, i.e. the same penalties apply whether the offences were committed in Singapore or overseas. Overall, Singapore adopts a coordinated whole-of-government multi-agency approach to vigorously enforce our strong laws against sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons.

[50] Section 376D of the Penal Code.

Our legal and policy measures against TIP are continually reviewed to take into account the changing landscape and dynamics of crime in Singapore. In addition, victims of abuse and exploitation (including TIP victims) are provided a range of support services which includes temporary accommodation, food, counselling, medical care and translation services.

Protection from Abuse, Neglect and Self-Neglect

204. Parallel to the Child Protection System, there is also a system protecting adults, including persons with disabilities, from family violence. Established in 1996, the National Family Violence Networking System puts in place access points for victims seeking support and assistance. This system links the Government, law enforcement, social services, healthcare services and the Courts for closer collaboration and networking, ensuring that agencies are clear about their respective roles and the management of cases. MSF also set up three Family Violence Specialist Centres (FVSCs) which provide specialised intervention for family violence victims, including counselling for victims, perpetrators and their family members. One of the centres focuses on serving persons with disabilities.

205. The Women's Charter provides for victims of family violence, including persons with disabilities, to apply for protection orders from the Court. Relatives, caregivers or appointed persons may make applications on behalf of incapacitated victims, who are unable to make applications themselves. Victims can seek the assistance of Family Violence Specialist Centres to make such applications via video conferencing.

206. To ensure additional protection for persons with mental disabilities, who are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, the Penal Code provides for the prosecution of individuals who procure sexual activity with a person, who by reason of a mental disability, is unable to make a proper judgment in the giving of consent to sexual touching.[51] The Mental Capacity Act further criminalises ill-treatment of persons without mental capacity.

207. The Government is currently looking into better protecting vulnerable adults through enacting the Vulnerable Adults Act, which will seek to allow earlier intervention in cases of abuse, neglect or self-neglect of adults who are unable to protect themselves due to mental or physical incapacity or disability.

Measures to Monitor Services and Programmes for Persons with Disabilities and Ensure Adequate Standards of Care

208. In May 2012, the Government circulated the Standards of Care for Adult Disability Homes and Hostels to all Homes and Hostels in Singapore. These Standards aim to provide for the protection and quality of life of residents of such Homes and Hostels. In developing the Standards, the Government took reference from various countries, modifying to suit the local context.

209. MSF also appoints a Board of Visitors, an independent body comprising of 11 respected members of the community. The Board makes quarterly visits to the Homes and Hostels to monitor the well-being and quality of care provided to residents, and meets with MSF twice a year to discuss its findings and proposed improvement plans for the Homes/ Hostels.

Article 17 Protecting the Integrity of the Person

210. As set out in the earlier parts of this report, Singapore law protects all persons from violations of their physical and mental integrity, including persons with disabilities. As noted in paragraph 1.13 above, a person is only deemed to lack decision-making capacity in the event it is shown that the person suffers specifically from mental incapacity sufficient to disable the person from making a decision in relation to the particular matter at the material time. Thus, persons with disabilities, including mental disabilities (short of mental incapacity affecting the ability to make a decision in relation to the particular matter),

[51] Section 376F (5) of the Penal Code (Cap. 224, 2008 Rev. Ed. Sg.).

would be treated on an equal basis with others in terms of the right to decide on their medical treatment options, sterilization and abortion.

Voluntary Sexual Sterilization and Abortion

211. Singapore recognizes the right of all persons, including persons with disabilities, to make decisions concerning sexual sterilization and abortion. The Voluntary Sterilization Act is clear that the consent of the person undergoing voluntary sterilization is required, except where the person suffers from mental incapacity which would affect his or her ability to be able to decide on this particular matter.

212. In exceptional cases of persons who lack the mental capacity to give their own consent, the Voluntary Sterilization Act provides for an additional safeguard by requiring the person's spouse, parent or guardian to apply for a court order declaring that such treatment is necessary in the best interest of the person. These measures seek to preserve a person's physical and mental integrity to the fullest extent and prevent arbitrary sterilisation of persons with disabilities who lack mental capacity. This is not a decision that a proxy decision-maker may make.

213. Singapore does not allow for forced abortion without a woman's written consent except where it is immediately necessary to save the life of a pregnant woman. To date, no termination of pregnancies have been carried out in Singapore without the consent of the pregnant woman.

Other Decisions Relating to Medical Treatment

214. Other categories of decisions for which a proxy decision-maker cannot decide on behalf of a person lacking mental capacity include decisions relating to the continuation or cessation of life-sustaining and extraordinary medical treatment, removal of organs after death, the making or revoking of advance medical directives and making or revoking gifts of any body part. These are excluded, because Singapore recognises the need to protect the integrity of all persons who lack mental capacity.

Article 18 Liberty of Movement and Nationality

215. Persons with disabilities have the same rights as persons without disability with regards to liberty of movement, residence and nationality in Singapore. Under the Constitution, Singapore Citizenship can be acquired by birth, descent, registration or by naturalisation regardless of disability and cannot be arbitrarily terminated.

216. The Passports Act (Cap. 220), which governs the issue of Singapore passports and other travel documents to be used as a means of identity and citizenship, draws no distinctions between citizens of Singapore on the basis of disability.

Article 19 Living Independently and Being Included in the Community

217. As part of its vision to enable persons with disabilities to become equal, integral and contributing members of society, the Government seeks to support persons with disabilities in the areas of education and employment, while concurrently improving accessibility through the implementation of UD in Singapore's built environment. Consistent with these aims, the Government provides accessible in-house and community-based support services to help persons with disabilities live independently with the ability to participate in the wider community without having to relocate.

Range of Support Services for Living in the Community

218. Singapore has a range of care and residential services for persons with disabilities to facilitate community integration and enable persons with disabilities to lead meaningful and independent lives. The services (as listed below) are provided by the Government together with VWOs. The Government recognises that caring for persons with disabilities can be costly especially over long periods of time. To keep care and residential services affordable, the Government provides subsidies to persons with disabilities. They are supported with up to 80% of the programme fees based on the per capita income of the household. This lowers the cost for families seeking to tap on Home-Based Care Services, Day Activity Centres, Adult Disability Hostels and Homes. The Government also provides lump sum funding up to 60% of the cost of operations for Drop-in Disability Programmes and Community Group Homes. In addition, these services are supported for a further 20% of the cost of operations through funds raised from the community by the fund raising arm of NCSS, the Community Chest. The Government continues to review its funding models to ensure they remain relevant and are able to cater to the needs of persons with disabilities and their caregivers.

Home-Based Care Services

219. The Government provides financial support for a range of home-help services operated by VWOs, which include the provision of therapy (including maintenance, occupational and physiotherapy), personal hygiene and grooming care, housekeeping and medication reminder service.

Concessions for Foreign Domestic Worker

220. Another way the Government supports home-based care is by providing levy concessions for families caring for persons with disabilities when they hire a Foreign Domestic Worker to help out at home. A monthly grant of S$120 (USD$86) and concessionary level of S$60 (USD$43)[52] is provided to support families to hire a Foreign Domestic Worker to care for family members with disability.

Day Activity Centres

221. The Government also provides financial support for 23 Day Activity Centres island-wide, which are operated by VWOs. These centres provide activities and services to enhance the independence of adults with disabilities by equipping them with daily and community living skills. To provide more options for persons with disabilities and their families, the Government also provided funding for part-time places (e.g. those who need the service less than five days a week) since 1 January 2014.

Drop-in Disability Programmes

222. The Government also provides financial support for the Drop-in Disability Programme, run by VWOs, and persons with disabilities are not required to pay for the services. These programmes provide socio-recreational activities for persons with disabilities for a few hours a day, a few times a week. It aims at improving their quality of life by enabling them to remain meaningfully engaged and integrated in the community, including the elderly at the Senior Activity Centres. Such programmes also provide a form of respite for caregivers.

Community Group Homes

223. The Government allocates rental flats for use as Community Group Homes to cater to adults with mild intellectual disabilities who are work-capable and able to live independently with some support. These flats are retrofitted with disability-friendly features. By enabling persons with disabilities to live independently in the community, the Government seeks to facilitate social integration and enhance their quality of life.

[52] This is lower than the normal monthly levy of S$265 (USD$189).

Adult Disability Hostels and Homes

224. The Government support Adult Disability Hostels, which provide an alternative living arrangement for persons with disabilities to live independently in the community. In addition to programmes and socio-recreational activities to encourage community integration, Adult Disability Hostels also provide basic training on independent living skills and residential-based training for work and life skills which enable individuals to resume independent living back at their own homes or in alternative forms of assisted community living.

227. Although Singapore strongly encourages community-based living for persons with disabilities, the Government recognizes that there will still be a number of persons with disabilities who are either neglected or whose families and caregivers are incapable of providing adequate care. Adult Disability Homes exist as a last resort to cater to persons with severe disabilities who need long-term residential care due to the high levels of support required for their day to day care.

Improving Accessibility to Community-Based Services and Other Public Facilities

228. There are affordable and accessible transport options for persons with disabilities, such as concessionary rates at 25% discount off adult fares for travel by public transport (including bus and rail). The Government provides transport subsidies based on income for persons with disabilities who need to take dedicated transport to access schools, employment and care services, as well as grants to transport operators providing these dedicated transport services in order that fares may be kept affordable. Affordable transport will help persons with disabilities and their caregivers' access community-based services such as the early intervention programmes, Day Activity Centres, sheltered workshops[51] and SPED Schools, as well as community facilities in general.

229. Persons with disabilities, who are unable to take public transport to work or school, can also receive subsidies to defray the cost of travelling by taxi. The Government has also awarded a grant of S$3.1million (USD$2.2million) to taxi companies to operate taxis that can accommodate larger and high-back motorised wheelchairs.

230. The Government's measures to increase accessibility to community services and facilities provided to the general population are set out in paragraphs 4.1-4.30 above.

Article 20 Personal Mobility

231. Apart from improving accessibility in the built environment and infrastructure set out in Article 9, the Government also seeks to enable persons with disabilities to move freely with maximum independence through education and training. To this end, the Government provides assistance in the form of subsidies that are available to persons with disabilities. The Government also provides several financial schemes and projects to facilitate the development and use of assistive technology in the disability sector. Through these, the Government seeks to partner with the private and people sector to provide access to affordable devices or solutions that can be customised to the needs of the different disability groups.

Support in Schools

Measures to Optimise the Use and Development of Assistive Technology in Schools

230. The Ministry of Education (MOE) continually improves the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure in schools to better support the learning

[51] Sheltered workshops provide training opportunities to adults with disabilities who do not possess the competencies or skills for open employment.

needs of students with disabilities. MOE helps to fund the use of assistive technology and development of innovative ICT projects in SPED schools. The Ministry also provides assistive technology devices for students with physical or sensory-related impairment in mainstream schools. These devices include frequency modulation equipment, Braille notebooks, computer systems with specialised features, talking calculators, voice synthesizers, customized furniture and ICT specialised software. The Government established an S$4.5 million (USD$3.2 million) ICT Fund to encourage SPED schools to strengthen ICT infrastructure and encourage the schools to embrace ICT technology in education. A network of ICT champions will be formed to share good practices across SPED schools.

231. MOE also helps fund purchases of necessary education-related assistive technology devices and support services for students with physical or sensory impairment in polytechnics and Institutes of Technical Education (ITEs). Singapore's publicly-funded universities are also committed to providing the same level of financial support for their students in the purchase of assistive equipment.

Financial Support for Use of Assistive Technology

232. The Assistive Technology Fund provides financial assistance to persons with disabilities to purchase, replace, upgrade or repair assistive devices. Assistive devices include hearing aids and motorised wheelchairs. In 2015, the eligibility criteria of the fund were broadened to allow all persons with disabilities to apply for the subsidies instead of just students or working persons with disabilities.

233. Additionally, the government increased the amount of subsidies available to eligible persons under the fund in 2015, doubling the amount of subsidies available to each person over his lifetime from S$20,000 to S$40,000 (USD$28,571).

234. The Senior Mobility and Enabling Fund provides financial assistance to elderly Singaporeans, including those with disabilities, to help them remain mobile and live independently in the community. The fund subsidises assistive technology, home healthcare items and transport for the elderly. Examples of assistive devices that are funded include walking aids, wheelchairs, hospital beds, special equipment such as oxygen concentrators.

Measures to Give Training in Mobility Skills to Persons with Disabilities

235. Prior to 2015, the Infocomm Accessibility Centre, which is funded by the Government, houses an Assistive Technology Loan Library at SPD, a VWO. The library has a wide range of assistive technology devices available for loan for the purpose of trial use, training and temporary accommodation. In 2015, SGE, in partnership with the Government, VWOs and private sector, set up Tech Able, a facility which provides information and resources on assistive and information communication technologies, promotes their adoption to persons with disabilities and employers and leverages on technology to enable more training and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. It also features a loan library and an assistive technology showcase that carries a wide range of assistive technologies that meet various needs and budgets.

236. Tech Able also provides consultation, assessment and training services by assistive technology experts for persons with disabilities. There is also a communications training lab on site, equipped with a contact centre system paired with assistive technologies. This facility prepares persons with disabilities to pursue careers in online customer service, social media marketing, or as contact centre agents.

Other Measures to Support the Development and Promote the Use of Assistive Technology

237. Besides the training platforms at Tech Able, persons with disabilities, their family members and interested employers can visit a simulated living and working space where universal design and assistive technologies are applied in simple ways. Visitors can also try out a variety of assistive technology devices targeted at enabling persons with different disabilities. Innovators and researchers can also come together to discuss, test ideas and develop products and services for persons with disabilities at this co-creation working space.

238. In addition, the Government initiated a Tote Board-Enabling Lives Initiative Grant of S$30 million (USD$21.4 million) over 5 years from 2014 to 2019. These funds can be tapped on for public education and as well as for innovation projects from the private and people sectors, including areas of data and assistive technology, which seek to improve the well-being of persons with disabilities and their caregivers.

Article 21 Freedom of Expression and Opinion, and Access to Information

239. The Constitution of Singapore guarantees the right to freedom of speech and expression for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with persons without disabilities.

240. In addition to improving accessibility of the physical environment, public transport and other key facilities,[54] and facilitating communication by persons with disabilities by encouraging the development and use of assistive technology,[55] Singapore seeks to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to find, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis as others.

Subtitles and Captioning for Television Programmes

241. Subtitles are provided for prime-time news bulletins on the four free-to-air television channels.[56] This makes broadcast news accessible to the hearing-impaired community.

242. To increase information accessibility to those with hearing impairments, MSF worked with the Singapore Association for the Deaf (SADeaf) to provide signing for the live telecasts of key events such as the National Day Rallies and the Budget 2015 speech.

Accessibility of Public Websites

243. Additionally, the Government put in place measures to ensure compliance by Government agencies with Web Interface Standards, a set of standards and guidelines for designing government websites that was established in August 2004. The standards aim to facilitate the navigation of websites and ensure a consistent user experience by standardising key features, naming conventions and the basic layout of websites. The guidelines also cater to the needs of persons with disabilities by adopting the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, an internationally adopted standard that was developed by the Web Accessibility Initiative[57] on 11 December 2008.

[54] Refer to Article 9 above.

[55] Refer to Article 20 above.

[56] The four free-to-air television channels are in Singapore's four official languages of English, Chinese, Bahasa Malayu and Tamil and are respectively, Channel 5, Channel 8, Suria and Vasantham.

[57] Information on the Web Accessibility Initiative can be found here: http://www.w3.org/WAI.

Making Hospital Services Accessible to Persons with Hearing Impairment

244. The use of technology is vital to aid communication with persons with hearing impairment. Patients are given the option of accessing certain patient-care services (such as appointment requests and medication refills) online or through text messaging. Hospitals also employ various methods such as obtaining assistance from staff fluent in sign language, or the use of aids such as pocket talkers, pictorial communication books and language cue books, to facilitate communication between patients with hearing impairments and the hospital staff.

Increased Access for Persons with Reading Disabilities

245. Singapore is the first country in South-East Asia to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty[58] to facilitate access to published works for persons with reading disabilities.

246. In line with this, the Copyright Act (Cap. 63) was amended in 2014 to afford persons with reading disabilities greater opportunities to access copyrighted works. The key amendments enable:

- Persons with reading disabilities and any person or institution acting on their behalf to reproduce copyrighted materials in any format that is accessible to persons with reading disabilities;
- The broadening of the scope of copyrighted materials permitted to be converted into an accessible format to include artistic works, sound recordings and sound broadcasts; and
- Institutions assisting persons with reading disabilities as well as educational institutions to distribute, import and produce for the purposes of export, such copies of copyrighted works.

247. Through these amendments, persons with reading disabilities, as well as institutions that assist them, such as the Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped and Lighthouse School, will face fewer obstacles when reproducing, or sourcing for copyright materials to convert into accessible formats. It also gives the community opportunities to access works from overseas institutions such as the Royal Blind in the UK and the National Federation of the Blind in the US.

Article 22 Respect for Privacy

248. Singapore protects the privacy of persons with disabilities on an equal basis as persons without disabilities. The Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) is the baseline law applicable across all sectors of the economy to ensure that there are adequate safeguards in the private sector to protect the personal data of individuals (whether in electronic or non-electronic forms). This is consistent with the Guidelines on the Protection of Privacy and Trans Border Flows of Personal Data, advocated by the Organisation and Economic Co-operation and Development.

249. The PDPA covers the collection, use, disclosure and care of personal data, including the personal data of current and former patients held by health institutions. The PDPA requires organisations to obtain individual consent for the use or disclosure of personal data, to allow individuals to access and change their personal data and to take measures to protect personal data, except in certain specified circumstances.[59] The PDPA also prohibits

[58] Amendments to the Copyright Act can be found here: https://www.mlaw.gov.sg/content/minlaw/en/news/press-releases/amendments-to-the-copyright-act-2014.html.

[59] For example, personal data can be disclosed without consent if the data is publicly available, such disclosure is necessary to respond to an emergency threatening the life, health or safety of the

organisations from sending telemarketing messages to Singapore telephone numbers registered on the national Do Not Call Registry.

250. All medical staff are bound by law[60] and professional ethics[61] to keep medical information of patients strictly confidential. Only healthcare professionals involved in the treatment of a particular patient have access to that patient's electronic medical records. In addition, given that these medical records are stored and secured electronically, and are shared across healthcare establishments, unauthorised access is also an offence under the Computer Misuse Act, and is punishable with a maximum fine of S$50,000 (USD$35,714) and/or a maximum imprisonment term of 7 years. Where there is unauthorised access of a protected computer, such as one used directly, in connection with, or necessary for the protection of public safety (including systems related to essential emergency services such as medical services), the penalties are a maximum fine of S$100,000 (USD$71,429) and/or a maximum imprisonment term of 20 years.

Article 23 Respect for Home and the Family

251. Singapore recognises the rights of persons with disabilities in matters related to marriage and family on an equal basis with persons without disabilities, as long as they are capable of full and free consent to the marriage. An individual who is unable to provide full and free consent is protected under section 26 of the Mental Capacity Act, which prevents a proxy decision-maker from consenting to marriage on the individual's behalf.

252. In terms of opportunities and support to start a family, all legislation, policies and benefits relating to marriage and parenthood in Singapore do not draw any distinctions on the basis of disability of a spouse, parent or child. Examples include Government co-funding for Assisted Reproduction Technology[62] treatments, as well as other Government grants, like the Baby Bonus.[63] The Guardianship of Infants Act and Adoption of Children Act also draw no distinctions between persons on the basis of disabilities.[64]

253. The Government has policies which support parents, including parents with disabilities, to care for their children. This includes maternity and paternity leave entitlements, infant care and childcare subsidies. Such measures aim to buttress the parent-child relationship, regardless of the disability of either the child or one or both of the parents. The Government also supports caregivers and families of persons with disabilities by funding services for persons with disabilities.

Additional Support for Caregivers and Families of Persons with Disabilities

254. A higher level of financial assistance and special support services are provided for children who have developmental or special needs in Singapore, some of which are set out in paragraphs 14.1-14.12.

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individual or if disclosure is made by licensed or prescribed healthcare institutions to a public agency for the purpose of policy formulation or review.

[60] Private Hospitals and Medical Clinics Act (regulate premise-based healthcare license holders) and Medical Registration Act (deals with professional aspects of medical confidentiality).

[61] Singapore Medical Council – Ethical Code and Guidelines, available online at <http://www.healthprofessionals.gov.sg/content/hprof/smc/en/topnav/guidelines/ethical_code_and_ethical_guidelines.html>.

[62] Assisted Reproductive Technology Treatments are clinical and laboratory techniques that involving the mixing of eggs and sperms outside the body to enhance fertility. They include but are not limited to in-vitro fertilisation.

[63] The Baby Bonus Scheme is a government scheme to help families lighten the financial costs of raising children. It includes a cash gift, Government matching to savings in the child's Child Development Account (CDA) and a CDA First Step grant.

[64] The interests of the child are of paramount consideration. See Section 3 of the Guardianship of Infants Act (Cap. 122) and section 5 of the Adoption of Children Act (Cap. 4).

255. The Government provides funding to VWOs for early intervention services, special education, as well as pre-school, before-school and after-school care. The Government also co-funds, together with the community, day activity centres for the care of adults with disabilities.

256. In addition, a Caregivers Training Grant of S$200 (USD$143) per year is provided by the Government, so that caregivers are better equipped to care for persons with disabilities.

257. Between Years of Assessment 2013 and 2015, the Government increased the quanta of tax relief for individuals caring for their parent, spouse, child or sibling with disabilities (set out in **Annex J**). In addition, there was an increase in the total number of beneficiaries[65] claiming at least one handicapped relief and the total amount of relief claimed between 2013 and 2015. These are shown in **Annex K**, and illustrate that these tax reliefs are being taken up by, and benefitting larger numbers of persons in the community.

258. Where parents are unable to care for their child with disabilities, case workers will work with families to explore various short-term and longer-term options before considering institutionalisation as a last resort. As noted in paragraphs 14.1-14.12, the Government recognizes the importance of respite care and actively partners VWOs in providing a range of support options and living arrangements to enable persons with disabilities to live in their homes or communities as long as possible. In tandem, subsidies are extended to persons with disabilities who attend the day activity centres on a part-time basis so that their caregivers can enjoy short-term respite from their caregiving duties. Short-term arrangements can also be made for persons with disabilities to live in adult disability homes, or residential homes for children with disabilities.

259. There are also special student care centres for students with disabilities. Subsidies are available to help low income families offset the cost of these respite care services.

260. Parents are also able to arrange for the long-term care of their child with disabilities, after they pass on. Parents may do so by appointing a successor deputy (often a sibling of the child) through the Mental Capacity Act. They may also set aside funds for the care of the child under the Special Needs Saving Scheme[66] to ensure a regular stream of fixed pay-outs for the child's benefit or set up a customised and case-managed trust under the Special Needs Trust Company,[67] a non-profit trust company supported by the Government.

261. Measures taken to prevent the forced sterilization of persons with disabilities are as addressed in paragraphs 12.2-12.3.

Article 24 Education

262. As noted in paragraph 3.4 of Part I, the Government adopts a life-course approach to services in the disability sector, ranging from early intervention programmes for infants and children to adult care.

Early Intervention Programmes for Children with Disabilities

263. The Government recognises that early intervention for children with disabilitiesimproves long-term outcomes for them and their families, and reduces the risk of further delay and sub-normal developmental trajectories.

264. For children with moderate to severe disabilities, the Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children (EIPIC) provides social, learning and therapy services. Each child's progress is monitored through an Individual Education Plan. Intervention is conducted by a trans-disciplinary team of EIPIC teachers, therapists, psychologists and

[65] Taxpayer is considered to be a beneficiary of a relief only if his/her tax payable increases when he/she does not claim that particular relief.

[66] See paragraph 7.10 for more information.

[67] See paragraphs 7.9 for more information.

social workers. To meet growing demand, EIPIC has expanded from 9 centres offering 1,350 places in 2006, to 17 centres in 2015, serving 2,400 children and is projected to grow further to 3,200 places in 2018.

265. The Development Support Programme (DSP) was introduced in 2013 for children with mild developmental needs in mainstream preschools. These children are supported with targeted, short-term one-on-one and in-class interventions in different areas of development, such as speech and language, socio-emotional, motor skills, attention and behaviour, as well as literacy. Another aim of the programme is to build capability within the mainstream preschool ecology to support children with mild developmental delays. The focus is on children aged 5 to 6 to prepare them for education in mainstream primary schools.

266. As at December 2015, the DSP has been rolled out to more than 300 preschools. Over 2,000 children and their families have benefitted from the programme. To keep such services affordable, the Government provides financial assistance to families with children participating in the EIPIC and DSP, based on their household income and means.

267. The Government constantly reviews its policies to meet the needs of children with disabilities. For example, in 2013, EIPIC funding was extended by a year (to include children up to the ages of 8 years) in recognition of the fact that some children need an additional year before entering primary school. In October 2014, the base subsidy for EIPIC was raised from S$300 (USD$214) to S$500 (USD$357) for all Singaporean children and the additional subsidies based on income were broadened to include persons up to the 80th income percentile, instead of the previous limit at the 50th percentile. The DSP is also highly subsidised by the Government to reduce the out-of-pocket expenditure on the programme for parents who pay between S$5 (USD$4) to S$200 (USD$143) per month, depending on their income level and the type of intervention required by the child.

268. To continually improve the quality of Singapore's early intervention services, the Advisory Panel on Standards and Professionalism for Early Intervention[68] was set up in January 2014. The Panel advises MSF on professional standards, best practice guidelines and a framework to monitor child and family outcomes. It also provides a platform to share information, feedback and best practices.

269. To better support children with mild ASD in mainstream preschools, VWOs such as AWWA (formerly known as Asian Women's Welfare Association) and Rainbow Centre, launched the Temasek Cares–Integration Support Programme for Pre-schoolers with Autism in January 2014. This 2-year pilot project helped children with mild ASD develop skills and strategies to integrate into mainstream preschool centres, thereby easing their transition into mainstream primary schools. The project was administered by NCSS and supported with a grant from Temasek Cares.

270. The Government aims to develop a continuum of services to provide targeted, needs-based intervention for children with disabilities. This would include better support for intervention in the child's natural environment at home and in mainstream preschools where possible, including more support for integrated models of preschool. Families, caregivers and mainstream preschool teachers will be better supported and expected to play a larger role. The Government will continue to build the capacity and capability of a pool of trained early intervention professionals to support this continuum.

Education Services for Students with Disabilities

271. Singapore recognises that different groups of students with disabilities require different forms of specialised assistance to fully optimise their potential and abilities for

[68] The Panel, which comprises experts from varying fields such as paediatricians, education experts and academics, also provides perspectives and insights on emerging trends. The Terms of Reference (TOR) as follows: (a) advise on setting of professional standards and best practices guidelines for EIPIC services; (b) advise on framework to monitor child and family outcomes; (c) share information, knowledge on best practices and trends in the sector; and (d) provide feedback on current issues on early intervention.

independent living. As such, Singapore provides differentiated support settings (across mainstream schools and SPED schools) to ensure that all children are educated in a setting that best meets their needs and that is most educationally-appropriate for them. All students with disabilities, who are not in mainstream settings, will be provided with appropriate and meaningful opportunities for interaction and integration with their mainstream peers over the course of their education, with the aim of providing them with skills to integrate well within society.

272. Primary and Secondary Education is heavily subsidised in Singapore for all children, regardless of disabilities. Generally, only a token fee is charged to remind parents that they too are co-owners of their children's education. This approach extends across both mainstream and most SPED schools, without distinction on the basis of disability. Where parents are not able to afford the token fee or where a higher fee is charged, MOE provides substantial financial assistance for students in both mainstream and SPED schools. This ensures that no child is ever denied education on the basis of not being able to afford school fees. Please refer to **Annex L** for more information on the number of children enrolled in different levels of education.

Education for Persons with Disabilities in Mainstream Schools

273. There are no restrictions preventing students with disabilities from registering in any mainstream school. At the same time, parents will be advised by medical and educational professionals on the most educationally appropriate setting, which best meets the educational needs of their child. Students with relatively mild disabilities, who are able to benefit from the curriculum in mainstream schools, usually attend mainstream schools. For students with greater disabilities who require customised long-term interventions in alternative educational settings (e.g. SPED schools), MOE works with selected VWOs to provide counselling and guidance to parents to help them make informed choices on school placement which will better support their child's specific requirements.

274. MOE provides training for all teachers in mainstream schools to ensure that they have a basic understanding and awareness of disabilities. In addition, every school has a group of teachers who undergo more extensive training to equip them with deeper knowledge and better skills to support students with disabilities in their respective schools. All primary schools are also provided with specially trained Allied Educators (Learning and Behavioural Support), who work closely with teachers to identify and provide additional learning support to students with mild disabilities.

275. Selected secondary schools, distributed geographically across Singapore, are also provided with trained Allied Educators to provide continued learning support to students with mild disabilities as they progress on to secondary schools. To encourage the integration of students with visual and hearing impairments in Singapore's mainstream schools, the Government designated seven secondary schools which make provision for these students in a mainstream setting. These schools are specially resourced to cater to the needs of students with visual and hearing impairments, and have specially-trained teachers, signing interpreters, and Braille production units to support the needs of these students.

276. Allied Educators also attend continuous professional development courses four times a year in order to improve their efficacy in supporting teachers and working with students with disabilities. These courses are arranged through their Professional Learning Communities, a platform for Allied Educators to share knowledge and best practices. The recently-launched National Institute of Education (NIE) Advanced Diploma in Special Education (DISE) is also open to Allied Educators.

277. Further, MOE provides grants to, and works with, VWOs such as SADeaf, AWWA, and Dyslexia Association of Singapore to provide educational support services for students with mild disabilities in mainstream schools. These services include dyslexia remediation and consultation with occupational therapists on assistive technology, which help mainstream schools better accommodate and support the learning needs of students with mild special educational needs.

Education for Persons with Disabilities in Special Education Schools (SPED)

278. There are currently 20 government-funded SPED schools run by VWOs in which students with moderate to severe disabilities may enrol. This recognises that some children require more specialised assistance and customisation of their education in order to realise their full potential and abilities.

279. MOE provides additional funding and resources to SPED schools, over and above the funding provided to mainstream schools, to better support these students. This is to ensure, for example, lower teacher-student ratios, purpose built school buildings, specialised facilities and additional provisions for the teaching of sign language and Braille.

280. SPED schools are guided by the SPED Curriculum Framework, which emphasises the provision of holistic education underpinned by a strong foundation of core values. MOE's SPED Curriculum Framework, "Living, Learning and Working in the 21st Century", articulates this vision and a set of desired Living, Learning and Working Outcomes for Special Education, as well as the Learning Standards to achieve these outcomes. It guides SPED schools in delivering holistic education customised to their unique student profiles.

281. To build whole-school capacity in curriculum leadership, MOE facilitated the formation of Curriculum Leadership Teams and Professional Learning Teams in all SPED schools. Curriculum Leadership Teams comprise the Principal, key educators and Allied Health Professionals, and take the lead in curriculum review and implementation. Professional Learning Teams strive to raise standards of teaching and learning by encouraging professional dialogue and learning amongst staff. MOE also introduced a series of collaborative learning platforms e.g. cluster workshops, special interest workshops and applied training workshops, to offer school leaders and teachers a wider choice of professional development options to meet their unique needs.

282. MOE actively engaged key stakeholders and consulted schools to ensure that the SPED Curriculum Framework is meaningful and reflects the perspectives and aspirations of the children with disabilities, their families and prospective employers. The Framework is built on a draft version released in 2011, incorporating Character and Citizenship Education as a Foundation for Values-Based SPED; and ICT as an Enabler for Teaching and Learning in SPED.

283. SPED schools are included within Singapore's school cluster system, and SPED students join their mainstream peers in celebrations of cluster events, such as Children's Day and Racial Harmony Day. A number of SPED schools are co-located physically with mainstream schools or have integration programmes with mainstream schools that allow students to have meaningful opportunities for academic and social integration, such as through joint lessons, joint co-curricular activities, and joint school excursions.

284. To provide opportunities for purposeful integration between SPED and mainstream school students, MOE established 16 Satellite Partnerships between SPED and mainstream schools. NCSS also piloted the Buddy'IN programme which aims to integrate graduating students from SPED schools with their peers at mainstream IHLs, to improve their social skills and acceptance of persons with disabilities in the community. Between 2015 and 2017, Buddy'IN will target 200 students from both SPED schools and IHLs each year.

285. MOE facilitated the development of quality vocational education programmes in SPED schools in collaboration with external partners like the WDA, and the ITE. New employment pathways are open to students as a result of these vocational programmes. Students have opportunities to successfully attain nationally accredited vocational certification and apply for jobs in the open market or for further advanced training. This helps prepare these students to be more employable, and lead independent and purposeful lives.

286. To further improve SPED students' opportunities for meaningful integration into society, and to provide more diversified training pathways to benefit more groups of SPED students, MOE, in partnership with MSF and SGE, adopted a whole-of-government

approach in developing a School-to-Work Transition Programme that will enhance the transition planning processes in SPED schools and help more SPED students bridge the transition from school to employment. Several employment pilot projects by SGE are in progress, including an internship programme for graduating IHL students with disabilities and transition-to-work pilots with hospitals for persons with acquired disabilities.

Measures to Ensure Adequate Training of Professionals in the Education System

287. Teachers in SPED schools are required to undergo a DISE or its equivalent to be equipped with relevant competencies to teach in SPED schools. To further develop their skills, teachers undergo the NIE Advanced DISE or attend disability-specific courses to deepen their knowledge and skills in SPED. The Government also provides scholarships to enable SPED teachers to pursue Master's degrees in SPED, as well as other training grants to ensure the continued professional development of SPED teachers.

Education for Students with Disabilities in Institutes of Higher Learning (IHL)

288. Singapore's IHLs, namely the publicly-funded universities, polytechnics and ITEs, have set up Special Educational Needs Support Offices on their campuses to ensure holistic and continual support to students with disabilities from pre-matriculation to graduation, which includes helping them tap on MOE's Special Educational Needs Fund as needed.

289. To ease the progression of students with disabilities from secondary schools to polytechnics and ITE, MOE transfers useful information (e.g. on medical diagnoses, assistive devices used and access arrangements for national exams) with parental consent to the receiving institution. This allows the IHLs to provide timely and appropriate support to incoming students. About 1% of the students across publicly-funded universities, polytechnics and ITE have some form of disability.

290. To improve accessibility in IHLs, students from the polytechnics and ITE can tap on MOE's Special Educational Needs Fund. This fund helps Singaporean students with physical or sensory-related impairments to purchase necessary education-related assistive technology devices and support services, such as signing interpretation. Students with physical impairment may receive up to S$5,000 (USD$3,571) (for assistive technology devices), and those with sensory-related impairment may receive up to S$25,000 (USD$17,857) (for both assistive technology devices and support services).

Article 25 Health

Affordable Health Care Services

291. The Government provides heavy subsidies to Singaporeans, including persons with disabilities, seeking medical services from public healthcare institutions. The Government also put in place measures to ensure individual access to medical services. No Singaporean will be denied healthcare due to the inability to pay.

Medisave Scheme

292. Medisave is a national medical savings scheme where individuals put aside part of their income into personal Medisave accounts to meet their future personal or immediate family's hospitalization, day surgery and certain outpatient expenses. All Singaporeans are able to withdraw monies from their own or their family members' Medisave accounts to pay for their healthcare needs.

Universal Coverage Under the MediShield Life Insurance Scheme

293. Since 1 November 2015, all Singapore residents have received universal basic health insurance coverage for life under the MediShield Life scheme, regardless of any pre-existing conditions or disabilities they might have. MediShield Life provides coverage such as subsidised treatment in public hospitals and selected costly outpatient treatments, including dialysis and chemotherapy for cancer. In order to ensure that no Singapore resident will lose MediShield Life coverage due to their inability to afford its premiums, the Government provides significant financial support, with higher subsidies granted to individuals with lower income levels. Up to two-thirds of Singapore resident households are likely to qualify for such subsidies. Singapore residents may use the monies in their Medisave accounts to fully pay their MediShield Life premiums. If this is insufficient, the immediate family members of the policyholder may use their Medisave monies to pay his premiums. The Government provides additional subsidies for policyholders who need assistance even after the initial subsidies and usage of their and their immediate family members' Medisave monies.

Efforts to Minimize Discrimination by Private Insurers

294. Singapore placed a reservation against Article 25(e), as Singapore currently does not mandate private insurance companies to provide insurance for persons with disabilities. However, Singapore supports the principle of non-discriminatory treatment towards persons with disabilities and is looking to incorporate this general principle in guidelines that private insurers are expected to abide by within the next two years. The Government also engages with and encourages insurance industry associations in Singapore to formulate industry guidelines on fair and responsible insurance practices towards persons with disabilities. Singapore residents with disabilities may still obtain full health insurance coverage through the national health insurance schemes described in paragraphs 20.3 and 20.5, which are regulated by the Ministry of Health (MOH) and provided without any discrimination on the basis of disability.

295. In addition, MOH appointed three private insurers to run ElderShield, an affordable severe disability insurance scheme which provides a monthly cash payout to help pay the out-of-pocket expenses for the care of a severely-disabled person. All Singapore residents, with Medisave accounts are offered coverage under ElderShield at the age of 40, and premiums may be paid using Medisave monies or cash.

296. Under MOH regulations, private insurers are also prohibited from discriminating against persons with disabilities in relation to two private insurance schemes — the Integrated Shield Plans and ElderShield Supplements, except where there are fair and reasonable grounds such as due to actuarial or expert data. Integrated Shield Plans are health insurance plans comprising a basic MediShield Life component and an optional top-up component with additional benefits provided by private insurers, while the ElderShield Supplement Scheme complements ElderShield by offering additional benefits at higher premium levels, and is provided by private insurers.

Medifund Scheme

297. The Government also set up Medifund, an endowment fund which helps needy Singaporeans who are unable to pay for their subsidised medical expenses, despite drawing on other means of payment such as their Medisave accounts, MediShield Life policies and cash.

298. Through a combination of the above schemes, the Government seeks to ensure that every Singaporean has access to medical services, regardless of their economic status, disability or any other health conditions.

Measures Providing for Early Detection to Allow for Timely Intervention

299. Singapore recognises the importance of early identification and treatment of children with development and behavioural problems in, amongst others, minimising the impact of a child's disability. The Government actively works with VWOs to implement early childhood intervention programmes, which can shift the odds towards more favourable outcomes in development. The Child Development Programme is one such programme funded by the Government that provides early surveillance, diagnosis and interim intervention for preschool children with developmental needs, at the critical period of 0–6 years of age. Parents whose children are suspected of having developmental issues are referred by paediatricians and doctors from outpatient private and public clinics offering primary healthcare services to the Child Development Units in KKH or NUH for a detailed assessment and diagnosis of the condition.[69]

300. Once diagnosed with developmental issues by a child development specialist, such children will undergo interim intervention therapy, which may include speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy. These take place before the children are referred to community agencies for other early intervention services that would enable them to bridge developmental gaps before they begin their primary school education.

301. To improve early detection, KKH began a pilot project in May 2014 to train developmental nurses to screen babies at high-risk of developing developmental delays. The first group of 9 month-old babies were screened in October 2014. HPB works with polyclinics (public sector outpatient clinics offering primary healthcare services) to include health education (such as nutrition, oral health and use of growth and development checklists) into their screening sessions for children. HPB and MOH are also engaged in exploring ways to remind parents to track their children's growth and development, and provide guidance on when and where to seek appropriate medical attention.

302. To increase awareness of early identification and intervention amongst health professionals and other service providers, MOH works with senior child development specialists and other relevant professional bodies on guidelines to strengthen the developmental health screening and early referral scheme for infants at-risk of developing developmental delays. MOH also works with undergraduate medical schools to incorporate relevant modules on care for persons with disabilities into the medical curriculum, in addition to such existing modules.

303. The structured developmental assessment framework implemented at polyclinics is based on a Health Booklet published by HPB. This booklet is given to every Singaporean baby born in Singapore and contains developmental assessment checklists developed by local child development experts. Both parents and healthcare professionals utilise the development checklists to monitor developmental milestones and assess the development of a growing child from birth to 6 years of age, to encourage early diagnosis of developmental issues and thus early intervention.

304. The above measures providing for early detection are followed by early intervention programmes and development support programmes set out in more detail in paragraphs 19.2-19.9.

Accessibility of Health Services and Health Promotion Efforts

305. As noted in paragraph 16.6, hospitals provide different patient-care services to cater to each patient's needs, including the use of aids such as pocket talkers, pictorial communication books and language cue books.

306. The Health Booklet's developmental checklists may also be found in the four official languages of Singapore. In 2012, HPB also introduced resource kits such as

[69] In the last 5 years till 2014, close to 17,000 children have undergone interim intervention therapy under the Child Development Programme.

Healthier Child, Brighter Future and *Care & Development*, designed for easy reading, to enable parents to make informed choices on their child's developmental life stages. As part of its efforts to gather feedback and improve accessibility of these checklists, KKH conducted a survey to find out how much parents currently know about the growth and development checklists in the Health Booklet. Findings from the survey may then feed into the creation of more accessible checklists.

Sanitary Provisions for Persons with Disabilities

307. Singapore recognises the importance of adequate provision of accessible toilets in public places. Under the Public Health Act, all premises patronised primarily by members of the public shall have adequate provision of toilets. Further, under the regulations of the Code of Accessibility in the Built Environment, at least one accessible toilet has to be provided for every cluster of toilets; and one ambulant disabled toilet has to be provided for every five water closet cubicles provided.

Training of Healthcare Professionals in Care of Persons with Disabilities

308. The College of Family Physicians collaborated with MSF to organise a course on Improving Healthcare for Persons with Disabilities in April 2014 to raise awareness among healthcare professionals of the special needs of persons with disabilities, including training doctors on how to recognise children with developmental needs and providing sources of referrals for intervention services.

Mental Health Services for Persons with Intellectual Disability and Co-Morbid Mental Disorders

309. For persons with intellectual disability, co-morbid mental disorders can affect their daily functioning, disrupt family relations, and prevent access to community resources for care, training and habilitation. Timely assessment and detection of mental health issues is paramount to optimising such person's functional capabilities. With this in mind, the Institute of Mental Health set up Intellectual Disability Clinics in 2013 to serve the mental health needs of persons with intellectual disabilities. These clinics are run by a team, consisting of a psychiatrist, psychologists, an occupational therapist, and a medical social worker, who have been trained to carry out assessments and interventions for persons with intellectual disabilities aged 19 to 64 years. These clinics review patients with psychiatric co-morbidities, and consider treatment modalities such as behaviour therapy, addressing sensory issues, environmental manipulation and improving communication skills.

Article 26 Habilitation and Rehabilitation

Continuum of Care Options for Persons with Disabilities

310. The second EM adopts a life-course approach to enable persons with disabilities and provides various programmes and services for persons with disabilities. These include the areas discussed above on early intervention, education, employment, accessibility of the built environment and to social services that cater to individual needs, depending on the severity of the disabilities.

311. The Government believes that efforts to attain maximum independence and full inclusion and participation must start as early as in the pre-school years and therefore provides early intervention services and different educational options for persons with disabilities from childhood to adulthood.[70] These are followed by measures to enhance

[70] These are set out in paragraphs 19.1 to 19.29 of Article 24.

employability and employment options, as well as other care services. The various educational and training options cater to the differing needs and preferences of persons with disabilities and their families.

Promotion of Initial and Continuous Training for Professionals and Staff Working in Habilitation and Rehabilitation Programmes

312. Social service professionals are able to obtain continuing education, training, career services and other community and social services resources at an integrated social service hub, the Social Service Institute, set up under the NCSS. The Institute also provides a range of programmes relevant to individuals with differing qualifications, such as Advanced Certificates and Diploma courses in Social Service. More recently, MSF worked with NCSS and developed a National Social Work Competency Framework, which provides greater clarity on knowledge and skills required for professional development and career progression for social workers.

313. To improve the quality of early intervention services, MSF introduced compulsory teacher training requirements for EIPIC[71] teachers in October 2014. It is also building up a pool of Learning Support Educators (LSEds), who are preschool teachers specially trained to serve in the DSP.[72] The LSEds screen children to identify those with mild developmental delays, conduct intervention and generalise intervention strategies into the classroom setting so that the children are well-supported by their teachers, even after the intervention has ceased. MSF is also developing Continuing Professional Development frameworks for EIPIC teachers and LSEds. A consultancy team from KKH and NUH engages EIPIC centres individually to further develop centre capabilities and improve service standards.

314. In order to obtain and continue holding a license to operate, staff of Adult Disability Homes and Hostels are required to undergo training to ensure that they are able to carry out their work with confidence and competence. Core training topics include skills to care for persons with disabilities, managing challenging behaviours, self-care, code of ethics and fire safety.

315. To enhance professional capacity and capability in the sector, and benefit from economies of scale, Therapy Hubs were set up by SPD, Thye Hwa Kwan and AWWA to recruit, supervise and manage pools of qualified therapists. These therapists are deployed to VWOs serving persons with disabilities and the elderly, and train nursing or therapy assistants in patient care skills. There are plans to expand these Hubs to provide more services to the VWOs.

316. To ensure effective recruitment and retention of quality staff, MSF extended key development programmes for social service professionals, including the Leadership Development Programme,[73] the Sabbatical Leave Scheme,[74] and the Professional Development and Management Programme.[75] MSF and NCSS are also working with social sector professionals to develop career pathways and Continuing Professional Development frameworks. This includes plans to scale up the two existing Therapy Hubs and the creation of a new Community Psychology Hub.

317. The Social Service Institute's (described above at paragraph 21.3) functions were expanded in 2013 beyond the provision of training for social service professionals. The

[71] For more information on EIPIC, see paragraph 19.3 above.

[72] For more information on DSP, see paragraph 19.4 above.

[73] This programme aims to develop professionals with the potential to take on management or specialist leadership positions in their organisation. More information can be found at https://www.ncss.gov.sg/social_service_jobs/ldp.asp.

[74] This scheme aims to provide social workers with the opportunity to recharge and refresh themselves, as well as engage in activities for professional advancement should they so choose. More information can be found at http://app.msf.gov.sg/Assistance/Sabbatical-Leave-Scheme.

[75] This programme aims to develop professionals with leadership and management potential who are starting to take on management roles in their organisation. More information can be found at https://www.ncss.gov.sg/vwocorner/pdmp.asp.

Institute is the focal point for learning and manpower development, including the management of a one-stop career centre promoting and facilitating entry to jobs in the social service sector, strengthening the value proposition of social service scholarships, and promoting career opportunities to overseas Singaporean students.

Measures to Enhance Employment and Employability

318. The efforts and measures undertaken by the Government to ensure habilitation and rehabilitation in the areas of work and the community are discussed in paragraphs 22.1-22.17 in relation to work and employment and paragraphs 14.1-14.12 in relation to independent living by persons with disabilities.

Measures taken for the promotion and use of assistive technologies relating to habilitation and rehabilitation

319. As noted in paragraphs 15.1-15.10, the Government provides financial assistance through various programmes and subsidies to help defray and promote the adoption of assistive technology, while concurrently seeking to build and strengthen the ICT infrastructure to support the learning needs of persons with disabilities. The Government also provides grants and works with VWOs to provide educational support to students with physical and/or sensory impairments in mainstream schools. Through these, schools can better accommodate and support the learning needs of their students.

320. As noted in paragraphs 15.8-15.10, SGE, working with the Government, VWOs and private sector, set up Tech Able in October 2015, a facility which aims to promote the development, awareness and adoption of assistive devices and technologies. Similarly, MSF partnered the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore to offer a grant for VWOs providing disability services to adopt Information Technology/Assistive Technology enabled projects. This harnesses technology to facilitate services for persons with disabilities.[76]

Article 27 Work and Employment

321. Singapore is committed to enabling persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others, as employment forms part of the Government's vision to recognise and empower persons with disabilities and give them full opportunity to become integral and contributing members of society.[77]

Measures to Ensure Protection in the Course of Employment on an Equal Basis as Persons without Disabilities

322. As mentioned in paragraph 2.5, TAFEP issued guidelines that set out fair employment practices for adoption by employers.[78] Besides preventing discrimination at the workplace, it also encourages employers to adopt progressive human resource practices that benefit both employers and employees. TAFEP also provides advice and assistance to those who have encountered discrimination at the workplace due to their disabilities.

323. Laws in place for the protection of employees apply to persons with disabilities on an equal basis as persons without disabilities. This includes the restrictions on dismissal of employees before and after their delivery of a child under the Employment Act (Cap. 91) and the Child Development Co-Savings Act (Cap. 38A), as well as the termination of

[76] Refer to Article 20 for details.

[77] Source: EM 2012-2016, Executive Summary, at paragraph 2.

[78] More information on Fair Employment Practices as well as the principles, can be found here: https://www.tafep.sg/fair-employment-practices

employees on the grounds of old age under the Retirement and Re-employment Act (Cap. 274A).

324. Persons with disabilities are also included in the Workfare Income Supplement Scheme, which aims to supplement the wages and retirement savings of older low-wage workers and persons with disabilities, as well as to encourage them to stay employed. As at August 2015, more than 10,300 persons with disabilities have benefitted from the Workfare Income Supplement Scheme.

325. Persons with disabilities have equal access to membership in trade unions for various industries in Singapore. Trade unions regulate relations between workmen and employers, and aim to promote good industrial relations between workmen and employers, improve the working conditions of workmen or enhance their economic and social status, and raise productivity for the benefit of workmen, employers and the economy of Singapore.[79]

Affirmative Action and Measures to Support the Employment, Integration and Retention of Persons with Disabilities in the Labour Market

326. The Government offers a range of policy measures and programmes to enable persons with disabilities to find gainful employment.

327. The Special Employment Credit scheme was originally introduced to raise the employability of older workers, but now also extends to persons with disabilities and their employers, regardless of age. This scheme seeks to incentivise the employment of persons with disabilities. For each employee with disabilities who earns up to S$4,000 (USD$2,857) a month, employers will receive credits of up to 16% of the employee's monthly wages, subject to a cap of S$240 (USD$171) in 2015. This is up to two times of what employers would receive for each eligible older worker employee. As of March 2015, more than 8,000 employers hiring 8,300 persons with disabilities have benefitted from the credits given by the Government.

328. Since 2013, SGE, with the Government's support, has developed and implemented a slew of measures to facilitate the recruitment, integration and retention of persons with disabilities in employment, centred around the concepts of 'ready employee', 'ready employer' and 'ready environment'. Together with its partners, SGE placed about 350 persons with disabilities into jobs in 2014.

329. The Government recognises the importance of vocational preparation for persons with disabilities. Currently, persons with disabilities can seek assistance from agencies that provide job placement and job support services. Some of these agencies receive public funding and other support to deliver supported employment services for persons with disabilities. Under these services, persons with disabilities are provided with job coaching in the workplace for up to one year, an increase from six months previously.

330. To provide a seamless transition from SPED schools to work, MOE, MSF, and SGE piloted a School-to-Work Transition Programme in selected SPED schools serving students with different disabilities. This programme offers more customised training pathways for students with diverse disability profiles who may not benefit from the national certification programmes but who are capable of work, to successfully bridge the transition from school to work. It offers three key employment and training pathways (employment, internship and training) to selected SPED graduates. Job coaches, who work closely with persons with disabilities and employers to conduct vocational assessment to match persons with disabilities to the appropriate jobs, assist to customise these jobs and also to provide internship and employment opportunities to these students. The pilot programme involved five SPED schools. MSF, MOE and SGE are reviewing this programme with a view to making it available to more SPED schools from 2016 onwards.

[79] More information on trade unions can be found here: http://www.mom.gov.sg/employment-practices/trade-unions

331. Several transition-to-work pilot projects are also in progress, including an internship programme for persons with disabilities graduating from IHLs and transition-to-work pilots with hospitals for persons with acquired disabilities.

332. Accessible training opportunities were also made available to help persons with disabilities acquire the relevant skills and work experience to secure jobs as well as advance in their careers. In 2014, SGE organised and supported 13 training programmes and workshops, which benefitted close to 200 persons with disabilities. These courses were heavily subsidised by the Government. Trainees may also receive a training allowance to defray the cost of their training and to encourage them to take part in the training.

333. To increase access to Continuing Education and Training funds for in-employment persons with disabilities, engagements with key stakeholders are underway to identify and address training gaps. Employer outreach has been a staple feature in Singapore's efforts to enhance employment for persons with disabilities.

334. In order to better support employers in the employment of persons with disabilities, the Open Door Programme (ODP) was launched in April 2014. The ODP is funded by the WDA and MSF. The ODP aims to enhance the employment and employability options for persons with disabilities, and to support employers in hiring and integrating these employees. The ODP is administered by SGE. Besides part-time and full-time employment, the types of employment supported under the ODP include home-based employment, and freelance or contract work. The former is especially important for persons with mobility challenges, as their employers can tap on funding support under the ODP to purchase special equipment/ tools such as adjustable worktables and special software for their employees with disabilities to work from home.

335. ODP offers a wide variety of services to individuals with disabilities and employers, and lifts the previous funding cap of S$10,000 (USD$7,143) per company. ODP subsidises the cost employers incur to recruit, train and undertake job accommodations for employees with disabilities. Within a year of launch, close to 100 companies have benefitted from the ODP. ODP also offers job matching and placement services and funding support for training and work preparation for individuals with disabilities.

336. To improve existing employment support and facilitation services, SGE works closely with WDA and the Social Service Institute to improve sector competency in supported employment services. In 2014, some 140 employment professionals from the disability sector attended training organised by SGE. A Community of Practice was also formed by SGE and SSI in September 2014 for networking, learning and sharing amongst job coaches.

337. A tax deduction of up to S$100,000 (USD$71,429) is also available to employers to defray the expense of building modifications to benefit employees with disabilities.[80] Furthermore, as set out in paragraphs 4.7-4.10, the Government has actively followed-up to ensure that close to 100% of public facilities and infrastructure are accessible to persons with disabilities and also provides various incentives, including financial assistance, to improve accessibility within private sector buildings.

Article 28 Adequate Standard of Living and Social Protection

Building a Nation of Opportunity[81]

338. Singapore is focused on building a nation of opportunity and an inclusive society where every citizen shares in Singapore's success. This is guided by key themes such as building a fair and equitable society, a cohesive community and a liveable and endearing Singapore. We continue to build on initiatives introduced over the past years to transform

[80] Section 14H of the Income Tax Act (Cap 134).

[81] More information on the initiatives can be found here: http://www.singaporebudget.gov.sg/data/budget_2014/download/FY2014_Budget_in_Brief.pdf

our economy and strengthen social support. The initiatives and policies are gender-neutral and are available equally to persons with disabilities.

Access to Clean Water and Other Resources for Basic Needs

3.39 All Singaporeans have access to clean water and sanitation. As explained in paragraphs 20.1-20.8, the Government has also taken measures to ensure that no Singaporean, including those with disabilities, will be denied healthcare due to an inability to pay.

3.40 The Government also provides financial subsidies and reliefs, including food rations, to Singaporeans who are unable to support themselves. These are explained in detail in paragraphs 23.4-23.14 below.

Housing Policies

3.41 Before the 1960s, most Singaporeans lived in over-crowded slums. Today, Singapore's public housing programme has gone beyond providing basic housing to building award-winning homes and environmentally-friendly housing estates.

3.42 Public housing is unique in Singapore. Over 80% of the resident population live in public housing built by Singapore's HDB, and over 90% of these resident households own their apartment. Known as HDB flats, such housing is acknowledged to be of good quality and affordable for many. HDB has been acclaimed locally and internationally, receiving the UN Public Service Award for its Home Ownership Programme in 2000 and winning the 2010 the UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour for "providing one of Asia's and the world's greenest, cleanest and most socially conscious housing programmes".[92] Singaporeans, including those with disabilities, are provided various subsidies and grants to ease the financial burden of purchasing a flat.

Singapore's Social Security Framework

3.43 Singapore's social security framework is founded on the principle of self-reliance, which places the primary responsibility to provide for one's retirement needs with the individual and his family. The CPF is a comprehensive social security savings system that comprises individualised accounts fully funded by both employees and employers, with active Government support. CPF primarily provides three essential elements of social security: retirement, healthcare and home financing.

3.44 Participation in the CPF system is compulsory under the law for all working Singapore residents (including those in part-time, temporary and full-time employment), and their employers. As at 31 December 2014, CPF membership stood at approximately 3.6 million, with more than 1.9 million active CPF members making regular contributions. 69% of 90% of the resident population is covered by the CPF system.

3.45 The Government also provides benefits and incentives for CPF members who top-up the CPF accounts of their loved ones. For example, CPF members can enjoy tax relief of up to S$7,000 (US$5,000) per calendar year if they make cash top-ups into the CPF accounts of their spouse or siblings with disabilities.

3.46 In addition, under the Special Needs Saving Scheme and Special Needs Trust Company (described above at paragraphs 7.9-7.10), parents can nominate their children to receive monthly disbursements from the parents' CPF savings after the parents' demise, or have these funds placed into a trust.

[92] 2010 achievements in HDB's Achievements and Accolades. Source: http://www.hdb.gov.sg/cs/infoweb/about-us/achievements-and-accolades/achievements/past-achievements&rendermode=preview.

Public Assistance for Persons Unable to Support Themselves

347. For individuals that are unable to provide for themselves despite their best efforts and who have no other sources of income support, the government administers targeted financial assistance, such as the ComCare Long Term Assistance scheme.

348. Singapore's ComCare Long Term Assistance scheme provides for the basic needs of persons who are permanently unable to work and have little or no financial support, including persons with disabilities, as well as their families. Individuals on this scheme receive free medical treatment in polyclinics and government/restructured hospitals.[83] They also receive free or highly subsidized access to a wide range of social services such as home help and day activity centres funded by the government. This is in addition to the supplementary assistance in cash and in-kind from community-based agencies.

349. Persons with disabilities who are work-capable but require support can get help from the ComCare Short-to-Medium Term Assistance scheme. The scheme assists those who are looking for work or are temporarily unable to work due to illness or have to care for children, elderly or other dependents, with little or no family support, savings or assets for daily needs. Assistance provided could include a monthly cash grant, rental, utilities, and/or transport vouchers, medical assistance and employment assistance such as job search and/or training. The amount and duration of the assistance vary, depending on the needs of the household.

350. As explained in more detail in paragraph 22.4, the Government also provides a Workfare Income Supplement which covers persons with disabilities.

Subsidies for Persons with Disabilities

351. Persons with disabilities and their families receive subsidies through various services, including those set out in paragraphs 14.2-14.12 and paragraph 19.6. Many of these services and subsidies are targeted at and made available especially to vulnerable persons and those in financial need. The Government continually reviews its schemes and subsidies to ensure that services remain accessible and affordable to the people who need them.

Income Tax Relief

352. The maximum amount of Handicapped Earned Income Relief for individuals with physical or mental disabilities which permanently and severely affects their ability to work was doubled with effect from Year of Assessment 2013. Other forms of income tax relief, such as the handicapped spouse relief, are briefly mentioned at paragraph 18.7 above. Please see **Annex J** for further details.

Age as at 31 Dec of the previous year	*Year of Assessment 2012 and before*	*Year of Assessment 2013 onwards*
Below 55	S$2,000 (USD$1,429)	S$4,000 (USD$2,857)
55 to 59	S$5,000 (USD$3,571)	S$10,000 (USD$7,143)
60 and above	S$6,000 (USD$4,286)	S$12,000 (USD$8,571)

Article 29 Participation in Political and Public Life

353. In Singapore, persons with disabilities are eligible to vote and participate in political and public life on an equal basis as persons without disabilities.

[83] Source: http://app.msf.gov.sg/Press-Room/Public-Assistance-PA-Scheme-Enhanced

Measures to Facilitate Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Elections

354. Singapore adopts various measures to facilitate elderly voters and voters with disabilities to cast their votes at polling stations. To improve access to polling stations, there are special drop-off points at polling stations for vehicles conveying elderly voters or voters with physical disabilities near the polling areas.

355. Polling areas are barrier-free. Wheelchairs are provided for voters who need them. Within the polling area, priority is given to voters with disabilities for the issuance of ballot papers. Polling booths are equipped with a lower deck so that voters on wheelchairs can mark the ballot paper easily and in secret. For voters who are visually impaired, stencils are provided so that they can mark the ballot paper themselves without assistance should they wish to do so. At all times, election officials on duty are trained to provide assistance to voters where needed.

356. Singapore placed a reservation against Article 29(a) (iii), which requires States Parties to allow persons with disabilities, as electors, where necessary and at their request, to be allowed assistance in voting by a person of their own choice. In Singapore, persons with disabilities can only be assisted in voting by an election official so as to maintain voting secrecy and safeguard the integrity of the electoral system. The election official is obliged to mark the ballot paper in the manner directed by the voter and is under oath to keep the voting secret.

Participation in Politics

357. Persons with disabilities are entitled to participate in Singapore politics on an equal basis with persons without disabilities.

358. One example of a distinguished Singaporean currently involved in Singapore politics is Ms Chia Yong, who was diagnosed with peroneal muscular atrophy at a young age. Today, she is an accomplished corporate lawyer and is also President of SPD, a VWO which focuses on helping persons with disabilities maximise their potential and integrating them into mainstream society in Singapore. In 2013, she was appointed to the 26-member committee overseeing Our Singapore Conversation, a national conversation initiative to ascertain the future that Singaporeans would like to see. Through the initiative, Ms Chia sought inclusiveness for persons with disabilities. Since 2014, Ms Chia has been an NMP.[84] As an NMP, Ms Chia is able to raise questions, suggest legislation and give speeches on all matters before Parliament, as well as vote on most matters before Parliament.

Article 30 Participation in Cultural Life, Recreation, Leisure and Sport

359. The Government believes in enabling persons with disabilities to take part in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport on an equal basis as other persons.

Measures to Ensure Accessibility of Cultural Life, Recreation, Leisure and Sporting Facilities

360. As noted in paragraphs 4.7-4.10, close to 100% of all public sector buildings, including community clubs, government offices, libraries, sport facilities, market and food centres, currently comply with the Code on Barrier-Free Accessibility in Buildings. Incrementally, Repair and Redecoration processes are being undertaken to ensure that all public sector buildings are compliant with the Code. This is to ensure that persons with disabilities can enjoy equal access to these facilities to take part in cultural life, recreation,

[84] Source: http://www.straitstimes.com/news/singapore/more-singapore-stories/story/chia-yong-yong-lawyer-undaunted-disability-20140812

leisure and sporting activities. Examples of user-friendly buildings include the Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay, Singapore Sports Hub and Gardens by the Bay.

361. The National Library Board's on-site resources, including their library collections and electronic materials, are accessible to persons with disabilities. For example, there are special audio books for the hearing-impaired and the electronic collections have been enabled with larger font sizes for the visually-impaired. As mentioned in paragraphs 16.7-16.9, Singapore has also ratified the Marrakesh Treaty and has amended the Copyright Act (Cap. 63) to facilitate access to published works for persons with reading disabilities.

Measures to Support Participation in Cultural Life

362. Persons with disabilities can also participate in national events, by showcasing their talents. At the 2014 National Day Parade, 13 persons with intellectual disabilities participated in performances that include drumming and marching.[85] Performing groups from VWOs, consisting of persons with disabilities and other individuals also performed for the 2015 Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Para Games.

363. In May 2015, the National Arts Council tripled the grant amount for SPED schools from S$3,000 (USD$2,143) to S$9,000 (USD$6,429) to take part in arts education programmes. This was in line with growing recognition that children with autism learnt better through subjects like drama.[86]

Measures to Support Participation in Recreation, Leisure and Sports

Within Schools

364. SPED schools customise their sports and physical education curriculum according to their students' disability profiles and needs. The aim is to equip students with knowledge, skills and attitudes to pursue and enjoy a physically active and healthy lifestyle for life. In most SPED schools, teaching periods of about two to four hours are set aside each week for physical exercise or co-curricular programmes. Some schools structure the co-curricular programmes within curriculum time so that all students have access to at least one such programme. The design of co-curricular programmes covers a wide-range of sports and arts activities that the students can participate in. Co-curricular Activities teachers also make use of community facilities to conduct extra sessions for sports activities, and in the process, students are introduced to community venues for sports. SPED schools also work in partnership with mainstream schools to provide meaningful opportunities for students to interact in sports or leisure activities.

365. SPED students are also active participants in disability-specific sporting and recreational activities such as sports events organised by Special Olympics Singapore and Singapore Disability Sports Council (SDSC). SPED Schools also tap on various funding sources provided by the Government to support varied sports and arts related programmes for the students.

366. To provide opportunities for children with disabilities to participate in outdoor play and recreation with their peers, NCSS collaborated with various partners including the National Parks Board and built the first of five inclusive playgrounds at the Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park in August 2015. To help overcome social barriers between children with and without disabilities, NCSS also launched a 'Community In Action' programme to encourage VWOs, SPED schools and early intervention centres to bring all children regardless of whether they have a disability, to the inclusive playground for play and meaningful interaction.

367. A resource guide titled 'Let's Play Together!' was created by NCSS in early 2015 for caregivers, educators and social service practitioners to equip them to conduct inclusive games and activities that all children, regardless of disability, can engage in. It offers ideas

[85] Source: http://news.asiaone.com/news/singapore/first-ndp-performance-minds-beneficiaries

[86] Source: http://news.asiaone.com/news/education/more-special-needs-schools-using-arts-help-students

and practical suggestions on how to modify a variety of activities for children with different types of disabilities, to suit each child's level of functioning.

Singapore Disability Sports Council (SDSC)

368. The SDSC is the national sports body for persons with disabilities in Singapore. SDSC reaches out to groups with various disabilities and offers a wide range of sports at both the elite (professional) and non-professional levels.

369. At the non-professional levels, SDSC reaches out to various stakeholders in the community, including SPED schools, VWOs, hospitals and homes that serve persons with disabilities and offers a range of sports programmes at an introductory level to expose persons with disabilities to the various forms of disability sports.

370. The National Disability League, organised by SDSC, provides a platform for teams and individual athletes to showcase their sports skills and engage in meaningful competitions in a range of disability sports. The event also serves as one of the selection platforms to identify potential athletes for the various sports development programmes and upcoming international games.

371. At the professional level, SDSC supports athletes through sponsorships, provision of training as well as coaching services, and manages and coordinates development programmes for 18 different sports. SDSC works closely with the various National Disability Sports Associations who are its affiliated members to improve the training and preparation of para athletes, including supporting para athletes in local and overseas training and competitions.

Special Olympics Singapore

372. Special Olympics Singapore caters for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, and is recognised as a National Sports Association. Special Olympics Singapore provides training and competitive opportunities in a variety of Olympic-type sports for persons with intellectual disabilities, including annual sports competitions and National Games every four years. These athletes also participate in unified sports programmes and mainstream events like marathons and sporting activities organised at the community level. Special Olympics Singapore also offers a range of holistic programmes aimed at contributing to the overall development of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

ASEAN Para Games and Other Major International Games

373. Singapore hosted the 8th ASEAN Para Games in 2015. This was the first time Singapore hosted the region's largest multi-sport event for para athletes, and the 8th ASEAN Para Games featured the most number of sports (15) in the Games' history.

374. Besides the ASEAN Para Games, Singapore's para and Special Olympics athletes have also participated in previous editions of the ASEAN Para Games, the Asian Para Games, the Commonwealth Games, the Paralympic Games and the Special Olympics World Games.

Measures to Promote Deaf Culture

375. The Government works closely with the SADeaf in meeting the needs of the deaf community. As mentioned in paragraphs 3.14, 4.5, 4.14, 6.3, 8.7, 8.12, 15.3, 16.3-16.6, 19.29, 20.15 and 25.3, measures have been taken to accommodate the needs of the hearing impaired community.

376. There are many groups and organisations in Singapore that are independently run or managed by the deaf community. For example, the Deaf Dragons is a dragon boat team

made up of mostly deaf and paddlers with hearing impairment; and Redefinition is an independent hip hop dance club for the Deaf.[87]

377. SADeaf provides a range of sign language courses including the Singapore Sign Language. While Singapore does not have a national sign language, the Singapore Sign Language is a native sign language recognised and accepted by the Deaf community in Singapore. It is a combination of the Shanghainese Sign Language, American Sign Language, Signing Exact English and locally developed signs.[88]

Part III.
Report Relevant to the Specific Situation of Boys, Girls and Women with Disabilities

Article 6 Women with disabilities

378. Singapore has been party to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) since 1995. The principle of equality for women is entrenched in Article 12 of the Singapore Constitution.

379. In addition to the Constitution, the Women's Charter provides a wide range of provisions which forms the legal basis for and lowers the barriers to the attainment of equal partnership between husband and wife. As set out in paragraphs 2.1, 11.1-11.16, all persons are equal before the law and the law also provides extensive protection for all women and children from exploitation, violence and abuse.

380. Gender equality in Singapore is founded on the principle of meritocracy, where equal opportunities are available to men and women. Even without special measures, women in Singapore have made rapid and significant progress over the last few decades, and have been able to participate fully and equally in all spheres of life and at all levels.

381. Policies and programmes for persons with disabilities outlined throughout the report are gender-neutral and apply to women and girls with disabilities on an equal basis as men and boys with disabilities. Thus far, Singapore has not had any issue with gender discrimination between persons with disabilities in Singapore. Girls and women with disabilities also enjoy the same rights and recognition under the law as girls and women without disabilities.

Article 7 Children with Disabilities

Best Interests of the Child as the Primary Consideration

382. Singapore has been a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) since 1995. Singapore's vision is to create an environment where children thrive. In this regard, the interests of children are paramount in our national policies.

383. The Singapore Constitution, and the laws and practices of Singapore, provide protection and fundamental rights and liberties for all children, including children with disabilities (see **Annex M** for examples of domestic legislation).

[87] More information on deaf-related groups and organisations can be found here: http://sadeaf.org.sg/news-and-media/resources/

[88] More information on the Singapore Sign Language can be found here: http://sadeaf.org.sg/sgsl-course/

Equal Rights of Children with Disabilities to Express their Views

384. Article 12(1) of the Singapore Constitution states that "All persons are equal before the law and entitled to the equal protection of the law". Accordingly, all Singapore citizens, including children with disabilities, are guaranteed the right to equality and non-discrimination.

385. Additionally, Article 14(1) (a) of the Singapore Constitution also guarantees every citizen of Singapore the right to freedom of speech and expression. There is also specific legislation[80] that allows children, including children with disabilities, to express their own views on issues of, amongst others, custody, care, and education.

386. Singapore also played an active role at the regional level in empowering all children — including those with disabilities — to voice their views on issues affecting them. For example, Singapore hosted the 2nd ASEAN Children's Forum in June 2012, which was attended by 36 child delegates, 27 adult mentors, and representatives from the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children and ASEAN Secretariat. 7 child delegates were children with disabilities. The forum provided a platform to promote meaningful child participation and for children in the ASEAN region to take ownership in promoting the realisation of their rights at the local, national and regional levels.

Part IV.
Report Relevant to Specific Obligations

Article 31 Statistics and Data Collection

387. As mentioned in paragraph 2.6 above in our report in Part I, about 3% of Singapore's population has some form of disability. Data on persons with disabilities is presently collected by government agencies when such persons use services provided by these agencies. The Government is currently also developing a system to better capture data concerning persons with disabilities who have applied for or are currently the beneficiaries of various government schemes and services. This system will enable persons with disabilities and their caregivers to keep track of applications for such schemes and services, and help service providers and the Government better understand the schemes and services being used, so they can better provide holistic assistance to persons with disabilities.

388. Through the EM, the Government adopts an integrated approach with the support of the people, public and private sector to build an inclusive society for persons with disabilities. MSF continues to engage and work closely with relevant stakeholders in developing programmes and policies for persons with disabilities. For example, as mentioned in paragraphs 1.23 above and 3.5-3.6 in Part I, the recommendations in the EM were drafted based on a ground-up approach, a series of consultations and focus group discussions. This ensures that persons with disabilities, their families and caregivers, and VWOs that serve and support persons with disabilities participate in this process. The progress of the current EM is shared with the EMIC. Various representatives of the disability sector and persons with disabilities can provide their feedback. Reports of the EM are also available on the MSF website to keep the public updated. As in paragraph 3.2, NCSS has conducted surveys with persons with disabilities on their quality of life. The results of the study will provide useful information in the upcoming review of the next enabling Masterplan.

[80] An example would include section 125 of the Women's Charter (Cap. 353), which provides that in deciding whose custody a child should be placed, the court would have regard to, amongst others, the wishes of the child.

Article 32 International Cooperation

Participation in Regional Disability Meetings

389. Singapore continues to participate actively in regional meetings on disability matters. Government officials and VWO representatives have participated in various conferences and programmes on disability matters run by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Concern for the Disabled (UNESCAP) and ASEAN. This includes the UNESCAP High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting held in 2013 and ASEAN Workshops on the Convention.

Participation in International Events

ASEAN Para Games

390. Singapore hosted the ASEAN Para Games in 2015. Refer to paragraph 25.15 for more details.

Conference of State Parties

391. Since its ratification in 2013, Singapore has attended the Conference of State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities held at the UN Headquarters, New York. In June 2015, Singapore co-hosted a side event with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs on the theme "Accessible and Inclusive Urban Development" at the 8th Conference of State Parties.

Article 33 National Implementation and Monitoring

392. The Government designated the Standing Committee on Disabilities as the focal point for matters relating to the implementation of the Convention. This Standing Committee, described in detail at paragraphs 1.20-1.23 concerning Articles 1 to 4 of Part II of the report, is an inter-ministerial platform for the co-ordination of disability-related policy and operational issues in the national implementation of the Convention.

393. Civil society is also involved in this process of implementing the Convention. Through the Steering Committee, government agencies engage extensively with VWOs that serve and support persons with disabilities in the drafting of recommendations for each five-year Enabling Masterplan. This entails a series of consultations and focus group discussions organised to garner feedback from persons with disabilities, their families and caregivers, and VWOs in the sector. Other members of the public are also invited to contribute through an online feedback channel. After the EM is adopted by the Steering Committee, the implementation of the recommendations is overseen by the Standing Committee on Disabilities, while the body that monitors such implementation efforts and provides feedback from the disability sector to the government, is the EMIC. This EMIC comprises representatives from government agencies as well as VWOs.